



ADVANCED SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IN MILITARY SOCIAL WORK



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The current wars in Afghanistan and Iraq represent America's longest continuous combat engagement. By the beginning of 2010 more than 2 million military members had served one or more combat deployments, and more than 1 million of these veterans had already left the military and become eligible for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) services. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have also resulted in unprecedented deployments of National Guard and other reserve component personnel and a major change in our nation's defense planning, reshaping our military reserves from a strategic force for national emergencies to an operational force that is integral to our nation's day-to-day military operations.

With no end in sight and the ultimate results of these wars uncertain, we are now challenged with both a military that is exhibiting the stress-related consequences of these long and multiple combat deployments and a rapidly growing veteran population in need of a wide range of combat-related physical and mental health care services. Every community in the United States has been affected, and service delivery systems are trying to respond. There is an urgent need to understand and engage with the military service members, veterans, their families, and their communities in effective practices.

Social work has sustained a longstanding relationship with the military community. As early as 1918, clinical social workers were being educated to work with soldiers returning from the World War I battlefields of Europe who were suffering from what was referred to as "shell shock." Early in World War II the social work profession recognized the pressing need for clinical services, leading to the creation of a "military social work" specialization. With this historical context the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is currently responding to a compelling mandate to develop guidelines and advanced practice competencies for a military social work "scope of practice."

Recent reports from the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) reveal a pressing need for social work practitioners to extend clinical and vocational services to the returning Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom service members, veterans, families, and communities (IOM, 2010a). The final recommendations of the recent IOM report (2010a) included a charge to TRICARE (military health care program) to develop a system of quality assurance overseeing all disciplines. In addition, each professional discipline working within this network of services should develop appropriate education, certification, and licensure standards for professionals to establish a scope of practice in work with service members, veterans, and their families.

Specialized education to prepare social work students and professional social workers to aid this population is clearly indicated. Through explicit course work, field experience, and clinical supervision, advanced social

work practitioners will develop a specialized scope of practice in military social work.

Military social work, as a field of practice and research, is critical to our relevance as social workers, to the advancement of new career options, and in our leadership among the helping professions. This does not mean that we endorse war or aggression, but rather that we extend meaningful help to those who have been affected. This is a moment in history when we can reassert our central influence as a pivotal healing profession in the midst of wartime and in the aftermath by promoting a vigorous social work research agenda and appropriate training to effectively prepare military social workers. This opportunity should not be lost (Flynn & Hassan, 2010).

The 2008 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards: Competency-Based Education

In 2008 CSWE approved the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), which moved social work to a competency-based outcomes approach to education. The 2008 EPAS specifies 10 core competencies and the educational context needed to prepare students for professional social work practice. The 10 competencies are common to all social work practice, whereby each competency is comprised of knowledge, skills, and values that define what social workers must know and be able to do to practice effectively with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (CSWE, 2008).

For social workers at the advanced practice level the 2008 EPAS further defines that “advanced practice incorporates all of the core competencies augmented by knowledge and practice behaviors specific to a concentration” (CSWE, 2008, EP M2.2, p. 8).

The 2008 EPAS does not posit the notion of “advanced competencies.” Rather, it refers to areas of advanced practice that can be extended and enhanced through specialization. Therefore, the 10 competencies inform a scope of advanced practice as they are elaborated with advanced knowledge and practice behaviors (CSWE, 2008). The current document has been developed for a military social work concentration and provides the advanced knowledge and practice behaviors needed for those practicing social work with service members, veterans, their families, and their communities.

Defining Military Social Work

Military social work involves direct practice; policy and administrative activities; and advocacy including providing prevention, treatment, and rehabilitative services to service members, veterans, their families, and their communities. In addition, military social workers develop and advance programs, policies, and procedures to improve the quality of life for clients and their families in diverse communities. Military social workers provide assistance and treatment in the transition from military to veteran status, including a continuum of care and services for military personnel and their families. As the signature injuries and diagnoses (i.e., traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress, depression, substance abuse, combat stress, readjustment issues, intimate partner violence, and polytrauma) evolve with current combat-related events, military social work strives to

respond by developing effective interventions and policies to aid service members, veterans, their families, and their communities.

Military social work, as used in this document, is a term meant to be inclusive rather than exclusive. Hereafter in this document the scope of military social work practice includes work with the armed forces, or the branches of DoD, which consists of the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, all state Guard and Reserves, and veterans of all eras and conflicts who are served by the VA. In addition, military social work includes noncombatant uniformed service members who serve in the Department of Homeland Security, the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Further, the scope of military social work practice expands to those service members and other individuals who participate in federalized disaster relief and humanitarian missions. Given this complex network of populations of clients who are engaged in military social work services, this advanced practice is defined by the provider/client interaction that, by definition, involves work with a service member who is affiliated with any of the military, uniformed services, or veterans systems noted herein. Likewise, the social worker providing services to this client base is by definition a military social worker, whether in uniform or not, veteran or not, government service employee, contractor, agency worker, private practitioner, researcher, or educator.

Military social workers engage in advanced practice including clinical modalities of individual, couple, family, and group psychotherapy; community practice and research; and case management to address a wide range of co-occurring mental health and physical health issues. Treatment goals aim to facilitate promotion of health, wellness, and resiliency for service members, veterans, their families, and their communities. This clinical practice typically involves the dynamic, interactive, and reciprocal processes of therapeutic engagement, bio-psycho-social-spiritual assessment, and research-informed clinical interventions and programs. Mili-





tary social workers approach their work with a relationally based, culturally responsive, and theoretically informed perspective.

Military social workers can be deployed into hostile and disaster affected environments to provide community, family, and individual assistance for military personnel and citizens in affected countries.

Military social workers strive to assist and to improve the organizations within which their clients work and live. Military social workers adhere to the Social Work Code of Ethics and the best practice and policy principles of the profession.

As with any field of practice, military social work involves mastery of content relating to social policies, specialized service delivery organizations, targeted clinical interventions, theory and research, organizing, and administrative practice skills. In addition, military social workers must have a knowledge of population characteristics and relevant physical health and mental health issues for current and former military personnel.

The following document augments and applies knowledge and practice behaviors for advanced practice in military social work for each of the

10 competencies. Taken together, these competencies are intended to frame a concentration in military social work. Following each of the 10 competencies taken directly from the 2008 EPAS, advanced knowledge specific to military social work is outlined in paragraph format with the corresponding practice behaviors following as bullet points. The military social work material can be seen at a glance in the matrix beginning on p. 20. In addition, the document includes a commentary on evidence-based practice and suggestions on military social work field education.

The document does not provide a mandate but rather offers a framework that guides curriculum development. Although it is not appropriate for every social work program to offer a complete panoply of courses or a concentration in military social work, some infusion of content relative to service members, veterans, their families, and their communities is crucial. Additional resources, including suggested assignments, are provided at <http://www.cswe.org/CentersInitiatives/CurriculumResources/CompetenciesforAdvancedPractice.aspx>.

EP 2.1.1—Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly.

Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession's history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession's enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth. Social workers

- advocate for client access to the services of social work;
- practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development;
- attend to professional roles and boundaries;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication;
- engage in career-long learning; and
- use supervision and consultation.

Advanced practitioners in military social work are keenly aware of the importance of knowing one's self, the professional use of self, and the importance of the therapeutic relationship. Throughout their work they identify as social workers who employ a strengths-based person-in-the-environment and bio-psycho-social-spiritual perspective across the life course in working with their clients. At the same time, they continue to reflect, assess, and seek supervision that prepares them to confront biases and value conflicts regarding their practice with the service members, veterans, their families, or their communities. Military social workers explore, identify, and resolve biases, myths, and stereotypes about the military and veteran cultures and how these cultures interface with the civilian communities. Social workers must be aware that the military is a microcosm of society.

Practice Behaviors

Advanced practitioners in military social work

- engage in lifelong learning, supervision, and consultation to enhance knowledge and skills needed to work effectively with service members, veterans, their families, and their communities;
- practice self-reflection and continue to address personal biases and stereotypes to build knowledge and dispel myths regarding service members, veterans, their families, and their communities;

- demonstrate a professional demeanor that reflects awareness of and respect for military and veteran cultures; and
- recognize boundary and integration issues between military and veteran cultures and social work values and ethics.

EP 2.1.2—Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law. Social workers

- adhere to the standards of their license or credentials;
- recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice;
- make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (1999) and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles (2004);
- tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts; and
- apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions.

Advanced practitioners in military social work have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. They are knowledgeable about the ethical issues, legal parameters, and policies affecting social work service delivery to and advocacy for service members, veterans, families, and their communities.

Practice Behaviors

Advanced practitioners in military social work

- employ strategies of ethical reasoning in an environment that may have policy and value conflicts with social work service delivery, personal values, and professional ethics;
- identify the military culture's emphasis on mission readiness, support of service, honor, and cohesion and how these influence social work service delivery at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels; and
- recognize and manage appropriate professional boundaries within the military and veteran context.

EP 2.1.3—Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information. Social workers

- distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom;
- analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation; and
- demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues.

Advanced practitioners in military social work understand the unique role of an individual within the context of the military and veteran cultures that value unit cohesion, teamwork, duty, honor, integrity, loyalty, respect, personal courage, and self-sacrifice. They understand the complexity of challenges and issues associated with military service and systemic issues that are associated with the military context. They are knowledgeable about the differences in expectations of the institution and of the individual. Advanced practitioners in military social work also understand the complexities of multiple responsibilities to the service members, their families, the institution, and communities that are unique to the military context.

Practice Behaviors

Advanced practitioners in military social work

- analyze the unique relationships among the client, the family, the military, and various veterans' organizations;
- use professional judgment to meet the needs of all involved clients;
- analyze appropriate models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation within the context of military social work;
- use appropriate practice models with service members, veterans, their families, and their communities; and
- demonstrate effective oral and written communication using established DoD/VA professional standards and practices.

EP 2.1.4—Engage diversity and difference in practice.

Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The di-





mensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, socioeconomic status, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers

- recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power;
- gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups;
- recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences; and
- view themselves as learners and recognize clients as the experts.

Advanced practitioners in military social work understand there are many subgroups and subcultures in the military and veterans' communities. Interventions and personal reactions differ over time with changes in social policy and diversity among individuals. Advanced practitioners in military social work understand the power and authority structure within the military (as part of the culture) and the impact this structure can have on the lives of service members and their families. They recognize the impact of intersectionality of various diversity factors (e.g., in-rank structure [hierarchy]; military occupational specialty statuses; racial status; gender; service cultures and practices; "family" composition and definition; sexual orientation; age; disability; life stage; culture and ethnicity; spirituality; and citizenship status) on direct practice. They understand the differences

in factors that motivate people to enter, serve, separate from, and transition into the VA system of care.

Practice Behaviors

Advanced practitioners in military social work

- manage potential conflicts between diverse identities within and among individuals and the military and veterans' organizations;
- manage potential conflicts between personal feelings/expression and collective/institutional responsibility;
- recognize the potential risk and protective factors among diverse populations and communities that may be the result of military service; and
- communicate with a culturally responsive approach that includes service members with varying statuses such as active duty/retired, guard/reserves, and combat/garrison.

EP 2.1.5—Advance human rights and social and economic justice.

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice.

Social workers

- understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;
- advocate for human rights and social and economic justice; and
- engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.

Advanced practitioners in military social work are knowledgeable about the potential conflicts between basic human rights and the life and duty of a uniformed service member. They recognize stigma, barriers, and consequences of help-seeking behavior associated with the military and veterans' experiences. Advanced practitioners understand peacekeeping roles, de-escalation procedures, and restoration roles in the spectrum of conflict. They also understand poverty, economic insecurity, and financial hardship in military and veteran populations, families, and their communities. Advanced practitioners in military social work demonstrate knowledge of resources for enhancing lives of service members, veterans, their families, and their communities.

Practice Behaviors

Advanced practitioners in military social work

- identify and analyze conflictual responses and potential consequences to conflicts between basic human rights and military life and duty experience;
- advocate at multiple levels for service parity and reduction of service disparities for the diverse service member populations;
- identify the needs of military and veteran individuals, families, and communities to civilian providers and workplace management; and
- teach skills to promote self-sufficiency, self-advocacy, and empowerment within the context of practice and culture.

EP 2.1.6—Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.

Social workers use practice experience to inform research; employ evidence-based interventions; evaluate their own practice; and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers

- use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry and
- use research evidence to inform practice.

Advanced practitioners in military social work are knowledgeable about evidence-based interventions, best practices, the research process, and the unique issues in the military context. Advanced practitioners in military social work recognize the importance of using practice experience to inform new research developments. They also recognize the bi-directional relationship between research and practice and choose the appropriate models applicable to this context of military social work practice.

Practice Behaviors

Advanced practitioners in military social work

- locate, evaluate, and analyze current research literature related to military social work;
- evaluate research to practice with service members, veterans, families, and their communities;
- analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation within the context of military social work; and
- apply different literature and evidence-informed and evidence-based practices in the provision of services across the DoD/VA continuum of care and services.

EP 2.1.7—Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.

Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course, the range of social systems in which people live, and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving physical and mental health. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development. Social workers

- use conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation; and
- critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.

Advanced practitioners in military social work understand the relevant organizational world-views and culture that influence military members, veterans, and their families and communities. They can relate social work perspectives and related theories to practice with veterans. They understand and critique the application of relevant social and psychological theory/practice models that inform social work in efforts to adapt them to the service members, veterans, their families, and/or their communities. Advanced practitioners understand system resources available across the life course. They understand the unique issues facing service members, veterans, their families, and/or their communities. Advanced practitioners understand increased risk and protective factors related to bio-psy-

cho-social-spiritual injuries and their treatment and diagnoses, their assessment and treatment, and a range of physical health and mental health issues associated with deployment.

Practice Behaviors

Advanced practitioners in military social work

- recognize and assess social support systems and socioeconomic resources specific to service members, veterans, their families, and their communities;
- recognize the impact of military transitions and stressful life events throughout the family's life course;
- identify issues related to losses, stressors, changes, and transitions over their life cycle in designing interventions; and
- demonstrate the ability to critically appraise the impact of the social environment on the overall well-being of service members, veterans, their families, and their communities.

EP 2.1.8—Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.

Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. Social workers know the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers

- analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being; and
- collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.





Advanced practitioners in military social work understand major issues in service provision, problems in accessing evidence-based services, gaps in coverage, equity in distribution, and quality of services provided to service members, veterans, their families, and their communities. They recognize the main concepts and implications of the Uniform Code of Military Justice for uniformed service members. They are knowledgeable about the development and implementation of legislation and policies affecting servicemembers and veterans, including relevant congressional, governmental, and oversight committees and groups (e.g., Office of Management and Budget and Government Accountability Office). They understand and articulate benefits, entitlements, and services for service member and veteran populations and advocate for veterans who may receive services in military and nonmilitary settings. Advanced practitioners are able to distinguish between advocacy and lobbying.

Practice Behaviors

Advanced practitioners in military social work

- communicate effectively with various veterans' service organizations to provide effective social work services and accurate benefits, entitlements, and services information to clients, their family members, and their communities;
- apply knowledge of the Uniform Code of Military Justice;
- use social policy analysis as a basis for action and advocacy with the chain of command and within federal agencies; and
- respond to civilian and governmental inquiries (e.g., congressional inquiry).

EP 2.1.9—Respond to contexts that shape practice.

Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of

practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively. Social workers

- continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services; and
- provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.

Advanced practitioners in military social work are knowledgeable about the rich histories, traditions, and missions of those who served and the current trends in service delivery systems to meet the needs of service members, veterans, their families, and their communities.

Practice Behaviors

Advanced practitioners in military social work

- assess service systems' history, trends, and innovations in social work practice with service members, veterans, their families, and/or their communities;
- apply knowledge of practice within the military context to the development of evaluations, prevention plans, and treatment strategies; and
- use information technologies and organizational analysis techniques for outreach, planning multiyear projections, for service delivery to service members and the veteran populations as well as to their families and their communities.

EP 2.1.10(a)–(d)—Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing research-informed interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

EP 2.1.10a—Engagement

Social workers

- substantively and effectively prepare for engagement with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
- use empathy and other interpersonal skills; and
- involve the client in goal-setting, focus of work, and desired outcomes.

Advanced practitioners in military social work understand that their practice involves an understanding of the unique risks and protective factors, as well as physical health and mental health outcomes, associated with military service that affect the service member, family, and his or her community. Advanced practitioners understand the distinct culture of military service and the unique aspects of individual and family life cycles related to service members, veterans, their families, and communities. They recognize sociocultural factors that influence the meaning of and responses to social work intervention. Advanced practitioners recognize

that engagement of the military client might involve contact with the individual, family members, and the unit command structure. They recognize the mandated nature of services for the military client.

Practice Behaviors

Advanced practitioners in military social work

- recognize the unique issues and culture presented by the service member, veteran, and/or family member client;
- establish a culturally responsive therapeutic relationship that addresses the unique issues associated with confidentiality and reporting requirements within a military context;
- explain the nature, limits, rights, and responsibilities of the client who seeks services;
- explain the stigma, risks, and benefits of seeking or not seeking services;
- engage with military leadership, the unit, veteran service organizations, and/or family members;
- demonstrate a knowledge base related to risk and protective factors associated with deployment, military service, and other aspects of life and role transitions that service members and veterans experience;
- demonstrate knowledge related to health and mental health illnesses, injuries, and outcomes for service members, veterans, their families, and their communities.

EP 2.1.10b—Assessment

Social workers

- collect, organize, and interpret client data;
- assess client strengths and limitations;
- develop intervention goals and objectives; and
- select appropriate intervention strategies.

Advanced practitioners in military social work understand complex biopscho-social-spiritual assessment, using appropriate tools and conceptual frameworks when necessary. They recognize client strengths, areas of resilience, and vulnerabilities. They recognize clients' readiness for change.

Practice behaviors

Advanced practitioners in military social work

- select and modify appropriate multisystemic intervention strategies based on continuous clinical assessment of military or veteran issues;
- use differential and multiaxial diagnoses that take into consideration signature injuries as well as other military related illnesses and injuries;
- use empathy, cultural responsiveness, and other interpersonal skills in completing an assessment; and
- assess coping strategies to reinforce and improve adaptation to life situations and transitions while also emphasizing ways of coping with readjustment from military to civilian life.

EP 2.1.10c—Intervention

Social workers

- initiate actions to achieve client and/or organizational goals and resolve problems;
- implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities;

- negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients; and
- facilitate transitions and endings.

Advanced practitioners in military social work understand and critique empirically supported best practices and evidence-based interventions and programs related to physical health, mental health, and/or psychosocial issues. They critically assess the strengths and limitations of select practice models.

Practice behaviors

Advanced practitioners in military social work

- use a range of appropriate clinical and preventive interventions for various injuries, diagnoses, and psychosocial concerns identified in the assessment, including crisis intervention and advocacy strategies as needed;
- engage clients in ongoing monitoring and evaluation of practice processes and outcomes; and
- demonstrate the capacity to reflect on one's own responses (i.e., affect and world views) that influence the progress in and the completion of treatment.

EP 2.1.10d—Evaluation

Social workers critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions.

Advanced practitioners in military social work understand the process of adaptation from evidence-based practice to implementation within a military context. They understand the research that informs all levels of practice as it relates to service members, veterans, their families, and their communities.





Practice behaviors

Advanced practitioners in military social work

- use clinical and program evaluation of the process and/or outcomes to develop best practice interventions and programs for a range of bio-psycho-social-spiritual conditions and
- evaluate their own practice to determine the effectiveness of the applied intervention on military/veteran issues.

Commentary on 2.1.10(a-d) and Evidence-Based Practice

Advanced social work practitioners in military social work need to develop knowledge and skills related to the selection of the most appropriate and relevant social and psychological theories, values, conceptual frameworks, and “best practices” in their work with service members, veterans, families, and their communities. As one example, VA (<http://www.healthquality.va.gov/>) and DoD (<https://www.qmo.amedd.army.mil/pguide.htm>) have developed and evaluated a number of identified best practices, programs, and policies specifically for military and veteran populations. Yet, as with all best practices, social workers need to ensure that they critique these practice models, review the quality of research methods, and avoid the presumption that these treatment approaches are universally helpful to all clients who meet the criteria for engagement with a particular method (Gray, 2009; IOM, 2010b; Kazdin, 2006; McHugh & Barlow, 2010).

It is the opinion of this task force that a “one-size fits all” approach promotes ineffective practice and may, in fact, exacerbate existing mental health issues for service members, veterans, and their families. If a uni-dimensional practice approach fails to attend to the unique psychosocial

needs and the intricate web of a service member's life, such impersonality may reinforce stigma and further alienate the very clients social workers intend to serve. In all situations, advanced social work practitioners need to rely on the best available evidence and their clinical judgment to recognize sociocultural factors, including client preferences, and to monitor ongoing progress with clients to ensure the most effective outcomes. Military social workers also need to stay informed about current events and to analyze current innovations and trends in social policy and programs focused on the military and veteran populations. Ultimately, advanced practitioners need to practice competently, ethically, and flexibly using a multiplicity of evidence-based and empirically supported practice models. A relationship-focused, culturally responsive, research informed, and theoretically grounded context provides useful scaffolding for advanced social work practice in military social work. Thoughtful reliance on practice wisdom and appreciation for the uniqueness of each client's situation may further enhance the skillful crafting of a complex approach to complex issues.

Field Education

Educational Policy 2.3—Signature Pedagogy: Field Education

Signature pedagogy represents the central form of instruction and learning in which a profession socializes its students to perform the role of practitioner.

Military social work in the context of field education enhances the ability of students to connect and to integrate theory and practice from the classroom to the field setting. As the signature pedagogy, field education for military social work strives to balance student learning of the knowledge, skills, and values of the profession with the organization's unique mission to serve the needs of service members, veterans, their families, and/or their communities.

Advanced practitioners in military social work may select field placements within the traditional federal agencies—DoD (e.g., military treatment facilities, installations) and VA (e.g., VA medical centers, vet centers). However, a myriad of other allied health settings and social service programs within and outside of these federal agencies can offer valuable field experience with the military and veteran populations. Field placements in non-DoD/VA national, state, and local agencies include those that provide direct services, support services and/or resources, policy analysis, research, advocacy, or other services that seek to improve the lives and well-being of service members, veterans, their families, and their communities.

Whereas some agencies may focus solely on serving the service member and veteran populations, other field agencies may provide one or more programs that focus on some aspect of veteran or military life to include working with schools and military families and their school-aged children; assisting with career transitions from the military to civilian life, employment, and/or benefits; providing supportive services and community resources to the wounded, disabled, and/or homeless; advocating for legislative action and change; conducting advanced clinical social work practice using a range of psychotherapy models that address physical and mental health issues for service members, veterans, and their families; conducting casework and veteran-focused services for elected officials;

program planning and developing innovative solutions to community-based issues; serving as contractors providing medical, social, and/or national security/investigative services to the military; and coordinating and conducting research activities with military and veteran populations.

Regardless of field placement setting, selection of practicum sites must be grounded in the student's access to appropriately trained field instructors. As recommended in the 2008 EPAS, field instructors for master's students should hold a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program. In addition, for advanced practice with service members, veterans, their families, and their communities, field instructors must be able to demonstrate preparedness and experience in work with the military and veteran population for student learning prior to initiating the practicum. When evaluating student learning and field setting effectiveness, field instructors and field educators should consider pertinent all elements outlined in this Advanced Practice document. Finally, field placement sites for advanced practitioners in military social work must maintain high standards of educational integrity as required by the school and by the profession.

Developmental Process for *Advanced Social Work Practice in Military Social Work*

When this document was written, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq had no end in sight. Service members, veterans, and their families and communities continued to experience unique challenges that required specific advanced social work practice knowledge and skills. In response to this need Marilyn Flynn and Anthony Hassan from the University of Southern California approached CSWE President Ira Colby and Executive Director Julia Watkins and asked for their leadership and support to advance a military social work concentration. CSWE agreed on and organized a national working group to formulate curriculum guidelines for advanced practice behaviors in military social work in 2009. The first meeting was held at the Annual Program Meeting (APM) in November 2009. Twenty-six invited leaders met and established a strategic plan for developing the advanced practice behaviors for military social work. The second meeting was held at CSWE in Alexandria, VA. This 2-day meeting consisted of 35 professionals from 25 institutions. Participants included veterans, active duty military, Public Health Service representatives, VA representatives, academic deans, faculty members, and others. Participants drafted a definition of military social work and the advanced knowledge and practice behaviors related to each of the 10 competencies. At the end of the meeting a 10-person steering committee was formed to further develop and edit the document. The steering committee conducted the remaining work by e-mail and conference call. After revising the work over a 2-month period, the team reconvened with 10 additional members from the at-large task force to get feedback and prepare the document for a final review. The final draft was then distributed to the entire task force, which was asked to provide feedback prior to publication. The steering group considered the feedback from all working group members before finalizing this document. Although this final document reflects the hard work, dedication, and leadership of the national working group, it is a living legacy shared with the entire social work profession so that mili-

tary service members, veterans, and their families may be served with the honor and dignity they deserve.

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Advanced Social Work Practice in Military Social Work

Educational Policy 2.1.1—Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly

Selected Practice Behaviors	Military Social Work Knowledge and Practice Behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advocate for client access to the services of social work ● Practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development ● Attend to professional roles and boundaries ● Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication ● Engage in career-long learning ● Use supervision and consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage in lifelong learning, supervision, and consultation to enhance knowledge and skills needed to work effectively with service members, veterans, their families, and their communities ● Practice self-reflection and continue to address personal biases and stereotypes to build knowledge and dispel myths regarding service members, veterans, their families, and their communities ● Demonstrate professional demeanor that reflects awareness of and respect for military and veteran cultures ● Recognize boundary and integration issues between military and veteran cultures and social work values and ethics

Educational Policy 2.1.2—Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice

Selected Practice Behaviors	Military Social Work Knowledge and Practice Behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adhere to the standards of licenses or credentials ● Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice ● Make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (1999) and, as applicable, of the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles (2004) ● Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts ● Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employ strategies of ethical reasoning in an environment that may have policy and value conflicts with social work service delivery, personal values, and professional ethics ● Identify the military culture's emphasis on mission readiness, support of service, honor, and cohesion and how it influences social work service delivery at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels ● Recognize and manage appropriate professional boundaries within the military and veteran context

Educational Policy: 2.1.3. Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments

Selected Practice Behaviors	Military Social Work Knowledge and Practice Behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom ● Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation ● Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and colleagues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analyze the unique relationships among the client, the family, the military, and various veterans' organizations ● Use professional judgment to meet the needs of all involved clients ● Analyze appropriate models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation within the context of military social work ● Use appropriate practice models with service members, veterans, their families, and their communities ● Demonstrate effective oral and written communication using established DoDVA professional standards and practices

Educational Policy 2.1.4—Engage diversity and difference in practice	
Selected Practice Behaviors	Military Social Work Knowledge and Practice Behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power ● Gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups ● [Social workers] recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences ● [Social workers] view themselves as learners and recognize clients as the experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manage potential conflicts between diverse identities within and among individuals and the military and veterans' organizations ● Manage potential conflicts between personal feelings/expression and collective/institutional responsibility ● Recognize the potential risk and protective factors among diverse populations and communities that may be the result of military service ● Communicate with a culturally responsive approach that includes service members with varying statuses including active duty/retired, guard/reserves, combat/garrison, and so forth
Educational Policy 2.1.5—Advance human rights and social and economic justice	
Selected Practice Behaviors	Military Social Work Knowledge and Practice Behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination ● Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice ● Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify and analyze conflictual responses and potential consequences to conflicts between basic human rights and military life and duty experience ● Advocate at multiple levels for service parity and reduction of service disparities for the diverse service member populations ● Identify the needs of military and veteran individuals, families, and communities to civilian providers and workplace management ● Teach skills to promote self-sufficiency, self-advocacy, and empowerment within the context of practice and culture
Educational Policy 2.1.6—Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research	
Selected Practice Behaviors	Military Social Work Knowledge and Practice Behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry ● Use research evidence to inform practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Locate, evaluate, and analyze current research literature related to military social work ● Evaluate research to practice with service members, veterans, families, and their communities ● Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation within the context of military social work ● Apply different literature and evidence-informed and evidence-based practices in the provision of services across the DoD/VA continuum of care and services

Educational Policy 2.1.7—Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment	
Selected Practice Behaviors	Military Social Work Knowledge and Practice Behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation ● Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognize and assess social support systems and socioeconomic resources specific to service members, veterans, their families, and their communities ● Recognize the impact of military transitions and stressful life events throughout the family's life course ● Identify issues related to losses, stressors, changes, and transitions over the life cycle of service members, veterans, their families, and their communities in designing interventions ● Demonstrate the ability to critically appraise the impact of the social environment on the overall well-being of service members, veterans, their families, and their communities
Educational Policy 2.1.8—Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services	
Selected Practice Behaviors	Military Social Work Knowledge and Practice Behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being ● Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communicate effectively with various veterans' service organizations to provide effective social work services and accurate benefits, entitlements, and services information to clients, their family members, and their communities ● Apply knowledge of the Uniform Code of Military Justice ● Use social policy analysis as a basis for action and advocacy with the chain of command and within federal agencies ● Respond to civilian and governmental inquiries (e.g., congressional inquiry)
Educational Policy 2.1.9—Respond to contexts that shape practice	
Selected Practice Behaviors	Military Social Work Knowledge and Practice Behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services ● Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess service systems' history, trends, and innovations in social work practice with service members, veterans, their families, and/or their communities ● Apply knowledge of practice within the military context to the development of evaluations, prevention plans, and treatment strategies ● Use information technologies and organizational analysis techniques for outreach, planning multiyear projections, for service delivery to service members and the veteran populations as well as to their families and their communities

Educational Policy 2.1.10(a)–(d)—Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

Educational Policy 2.1.10(a)—Engagement

Selected Practice Behaviors	Military Social Work Knowledge and Practice Behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Substantively and effectively prepare for engagement with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities ● Use empathy and other interpersonal skills ● Involve the client in goal-setting, focus of work, and desired outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognize the unique issues and culture presented by the service member, veteran, and/or family member client ● Establish a culturally responsive therapeutic relationship that addresses the unique issues associated with confidentiality and reporting requirements within a military context ● Explain the nature, limits, rights, and responsibilities of the client who seeks services ● Explain the stigma, risks, and benefits of seeking or not seeking services ● Engage with military leadership, the unit, veteran service organizations, and/or family members ● Demonstrate a knowledge base related to risk and protective factors associated with deployment, military service, and other aspects of life and role transitions that service members and veterans experience ● Demonstrate knowledge related to health and mental health illnesses, injuries, and outcomes for service members, veterans, their families and their communities

Educational Policy 2.1.10(b)—Assessment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collect, organize, and interpret client data ● Assess client strengths and limitations ● Develop intervention goals and objectives ● Select appropriate intervention strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Select and modify appropriate multisystemic intervention strategies based on continuous clinical assessment of military or veteran issues ● Use differential and multiaxial diagnoses that take into consideration signature injuries as well as other military related illnesses and injuries ● Use empathy, cultural responsiveness, and other interpersonal skills in completing an assessment ● Assess coping strategies to reinforce and improve adaptation to life situations and transitions while also emphasizing ways of coping with readjustment from military to civilian life
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<i>Educational Policy 2.1.10(c)—Intervention</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Initiate actions to achieve client and/or organizational goals and resolve problems ● Implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities ● Negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients ● Facilitate transitions and endings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a range of appropriate clinical and preventive interventions for various injuries, diagnoses, and psychosocial concerns identified in the assessment, including crisis intervention and advocacy strategies as needed ● Engage clients in ongoing monitoring and evaluation of practice processes and outcomes ● Demonstrate the capacity to reflect on one's own responses (e.g., affect and world views) that influence the progress in and the completion of treatment
<i>Educational Policy 2.1.10(d)—Evaluation</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use clinical and program evaluation of the process and/or outcomes to develop best practice interventions and programs for a range of bio-psycho-social-spiritual conditions ● Evaluate practice to determine the effectiveness of the applied intervention on military/veteran issues



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