

Social Workers

Social workers are concerned with helping people change their lives, relationships and communities to create personal and community well being. Social workers help people by: providing individual, couple, family and group counseling; advocating for resources and arranging and coordinating services.

Social work practice with communities focuses on helping members of a community assess their needs, develop their ability to meet these needs and obtain resources that will help the community to thrive and provide a healthy living space. The social work focus on social justice leads them to address problems such as unemployment, poverty, homelessness, domestic violence and child abuse.

Social workers' practice in a variety of settings including family service agencies, children's aid agencies, mental health centers, addiction services, hospitals, schools, correctional organizations, social assistance agencies, shelters, primary health care centers and consumer organizations.

In child welfare agencies, social workers investigate cases of child abuse, child neglect and family violence and they assist parents to create safe and healthy families. Social workers in schools help students adjust to the school and help the school accommodate the special needs of students

Those social workers who work in hospitals are members of treatment teams. Their role on these teams involves addressing the needs of patient's families, contributing to the in-patient care of the patient and arranging the services that patients need upon discharge.

In community health agencies, social workers provide counseling services such as individual and couple counseling, family therapy and group counseling. Resource coordination is also part of the social workers job. They participate in health promotion and illness/disease prevention and work as community developers who assist communities to better meet the needs of citizens.

Government departments are the usual settings for social workers who are involved in policy analysis, policy development and planning. Planning councils and research organizations also employ social workers who have developed expertise in policy and research work.

Social workers must have a Bachelor of Social Work degree in order to work in most provinces in Canada. An increasing number of social workers are educated at the Masters level since the increasingly complex nature of social work has resulted in many employers requiring preparation at the Masters level. Social workers are also often required to be registered with a regulatory board.

Adapted from: The Social Work Profession in Canada, presented by CASW.

For more information, visit the websites listed below:

Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers - www.nlasw.ca

Canadian Association of Social Workers - www.casw-acts.ca

Canadian Association of Social Work Education – <http://www.caswe-acfts.ca/en/>