



# Essential Nature Of Social Work

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WEST FRANKFORT – Social Work is a critically-needed profession that helps people break down barriers and achieve optimal living. Social workers are trained professionals who specialize in improving the quality of life and well-being of others. We do this through direct practice, crisis intervention, research, policy, advocacy, social justice and more. In the last year, social workers have become especially prominent in supporting families through the COVID-19 pandemic and in advocating for racial justice in the U.S.

The important work of social workers has a profound impact on several facets of life. There is the side that most people think of when they think of social work: child welfare, social justice advocacy, hospice, assistance in schools, criminal justice, but there is also the clinical side of social work. In fact, social workers make up the largest group of mental health service providers in the United States. Clinical social workers build rapport with clients, assess their situations, diagnose their illnesses and develop and evaluation treatment plans for them to achieve the best quality of life they can have.

Social workers are essential to the success of mental health care. Seeing the world through a strength-based lens, social workers can always see the potential in others. When I see someone in residential care who needs 24/7 attention, I can picture a future for them where they are living independently. My background as a social worker helps me to see past the current diagnosis and place in life and see *what could be* in a person's life. I approach every client with hope and with intentionality to enrich their life so they reach their ideal future.

All social workers, clinical or otherwise, have this strength-based view of the world and are therefore essential hope dealers and ideal future achievers. Operating from a place of compassion and empathy, we improve people's lives in many ways. We advocate for others, which can be clearly seen in the last year's intensified fight against social injustices. We encourage people to advocate for themselves. We inspire people to believe they are deserving of a beautiful life. We approach situations holistically, bringing families closer together through our work. We help people process grief, an even more important aspect of our work during our COVID era.

Without social workers, the areas of administration, advocacy, caring for the elderly, child and family services, disability assistance, criminal justice, employee assistance programs, mental health, policy, research and hospice (just to name a few) would suffer or be totally nonexistent.

I have been involved with many difficult cases in my role as a social worker at Centerstone. I think back to one situation of a teenager who ran away from home. I put myself close to the situation and observed to soon realize that abuse was rampant in the home. I connected her with social services, and she was provided a way out of her home situation. If I, or any other social worker, had not been involved, she would have stayed in that dark place.

This is why social workers are essential. We see things in the background that others might not, and are prepared to make necessary changes to improve people's lives.

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