

SOCIAL WORK LEADERSHIP DEFINITION

Leadership is the capacity to work creatively, constructively, and effectively with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to promote social justice, catalyze social change, and address individual and social problems. Leaders accomplish this by inspiring vision, offering direction, and supporting individual and collective action in order to obtain mutually valued results.

LEADERSHIP ELEMENTS

1. **SELF-KNOWLEDGE:** The ability to demonstrate the professional use of self in practice, including the capacity for self-examination, insight and self-awareness. Monitor the effectiveness of one's own professional practice through the appropriate application of research techniques and evaluation methodologies. Understand and acknowledge the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Understand the importance of continued professional renewal.
2. **CRITICAL & CREATIVE THINKING:** Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice. Use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to understand development, behavior and interactions across a life span. Analyze and formulate social policies. Evaluate social work research and apply it to practice.
3. **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION:** Understand the various modalities of communication and how contextual factors impact the effectiveness of communication with individuals, families and groups. Use verbal and nonverbal communication skills differentially with client populations, colleagues and communities. Employ communication skills to establish and maintain a relationship of mutual respect, acceptance and trust with other students, colleagues and clients. Share thoughts, ideas and feelings effectively in discussions, meetings, field placement and presentations with diverse individuals and groups. Demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication designed to affect change in clients, groups, organizations, communities and society in the interest of social and economic justice.
4. **RESPECT & INCLUSION:** Practice with respect, knowledge and skills related to clients' age, class, color, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation. Validate and enhance assets and capacities for all client systems and communities, particularly diverse populations and disadvantaged, vulnerable or oppressed groups. Respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals. Develop an understanding of their own personal, cultural values and beliefs as one way of appreciating the importance of multicultural identities in the lives of people.
5. **MORAL COURAGE:** Understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles and practice accordingly. Recognize the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply strategies of advocacy and social change.

Take appropriate measures to discourage, prevent, disclose and correct incompetent or unethical behavior by colleagues, and also to assist and defend colleagues believed to be unjustly charged with such conduct.

6. **TEAMWORK & COLLABORATION:** Use supervision and consultation appropriate to social work practice. Establish and maintain effective helping relationships that facilitate planned change. Demonstrate the skills necessary for constructive work within an organization. Treat colleagues with respect and represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views and obligations of colleagues.
7. **FOCUS ON PURPOSE OR RESULTS:** Employ strategies for change that promote empowerment of clients and social justice. Plan and implement social intervention strategies appropriate for use in direct practice or in management and community practice. Engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully. Strive toward the maintenance and promotion of high standards of practice.