

52. Human Services Cluster - Social Work Careers (4 hours)

Purpose/Abstract: To introduce students to various social work careers.

NCCCS Adult Education Standards: R.3.2.3, W.5.1.3, M.2.2.4

Learning Objective:
By the end of the session, students will be able to:

- Summarize the main roles of social workers.
- Recognize and explain, in simple terms, at least two personal qualities that are important for a social work career
- Write a short opinion piece expressing why social work is important in society

Soft Skills	communication	Resources	Math: Multiplication and Division Review Interactive Worksheet Education.com How do Multiplication and Division Relate Division Crossword Interactive Worksheet Education.com LCSW, MSW, and More: Social Work Degree Career Guide Handouts: How to Communicate Effectively - one for each student
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Additional Materials

- How to Communicate Effectively handout, one for each student
- Chart paper, if required
- Art supplies (glue, glitter, markers, paint, etc.)
- Pencils, paper, and scissors
- Computers for student use

Icons	Activity	Check-In	Review
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PREPARATION

- Review [LCSW, MSW, and More: Social Work Degree Career Guide](#) and familiarize yourself with the different career pathways for social workers.
- Review the following worksheets on [education.com](#).
 - [Multiplication and Division Review | Interactive Worksheet | Education.com](#)
 - [How do Multiplication and Division Relate](#)
 - [Division Crossword | Interactive Worksheet | Education.com](#)
- Review the [Instructional Support Guide](#) and print/prepare referenced scaffolds.
- Print handouts.
- Familiarize yourself with [O*NET](#)



- Familiarize yourself with [Skills to Pay the Bills](#), though it won't be used directly in this lesson.

INTRODUCTION (30 min)

Welcome students to the class!

Start with a quick ice-breaker. Have each student pair up with a partner and interview them about their interests and hobbies. Then, each student introduces their partner to the class using the information gathered.

Introduces the concept of social work and its importance in helping individuals and communities. Emphasize the role of effective communication in social work careers. Consider using the points from the excerpt below for the introduction.

Social work is a profession focused on helping individuals, families, groups, and communities enhance their well-being and quality of life. Social workers are dedicated to addressing various challenges and providing support to people facing difficult circumstances, such as poverty, mental health issues, abuse, addiction, and more. They play a crucial role in advocating for social justice, equality, and human rights. Social workers assess clients' needs, provide counseling, connect them with resources, and develop strategies to overcome challenges. They work in various settings, including schools, hospitals, social service agencies, and community organizations, striving to improve the lives of those they serve and promote positive social change. Effective communication, empathy, and a strong commitment to helping others are essential qualities in the field of social work.

Share the objectives of the lesson.

VOCABULARY, READING & WRITING (60 min)

Inform students that they will get an informational text on how to communicate effectively as a social worker. Explain the reading standard for this lesson and why it is an important skill to be able to read and understand instructional text.

Distribute the How to Communicate Effectively handout to students and allow 15 minutes for them to read.

Bring the class back together and have 3-4 students summarize the key ideas from the text. Ask students to guess the meaning of the following words using context clues within the text: jargon, vital, confidential, empathy. Provide support as needed when students practice using context clues to guess the meaning of these words.

Introduce students to the writing activity: *Imagine you're a social worker and you want to write about why communication is really important in your job. In this writing activity, you'll share your opinion about communication and give reasons why it matters for social workers.*

Provide the following instructions and allow time for students to complete their writing. Give students the choice to either work independently or with a partner for this activity.

- **Introduce the Topic:** Begin by introducing the topic. Write a sentence that tells your readers what you'll be talking about – communication and its importance for social workers.
- **State Your Opinion:** Share your opinion about communication. Do you think it's important for social workers? Write a sentence that says what you think. For example, "I believe communication is crucial for social workers."
- **Supply Reasons:** Give at least two reasons to support your opinion. Why do you think communication matters? Write a sentence for each reason. You can use phrases like "One reason is..." or "Another important reason is..."
- **Use Linking Words:** Use linking words like "because," "and," "also," and "for example" to connect your opinion and reasons. These words help make your writing clear and show how your reasons connect to your opinion.
- **Concluding Statement:** Finish your writing with a concluding statement. Write a sentence that sums up your opinion and reasons. For example, "In conclusion, communication is a superpower that helps social workers connect and make a difference."

Remind students to use clear sentences and take their time to explain their thoughts. Reiterate that this is their opinion on why communication is important for social workers.

 REFLECTION (15 minutes)

- ✓ Invite a few volunteers to read their opinions and provide constructive feedback.

Lower Level

Consider pairing students up for the writing activity.

Higher Level

Encourage students to think about various settings that social workers will need to use effective communication. For example, with elderly people, with children, with military veterans, etc.. and how they can adapt their communication for each population they work with.

Instructor Note: The reading and writing activities are both connected to the standards for this lesson. Do consider explaining the standard to students and why these are important skills for them.

MATHEMATICS (45 min)

Inform students that they will continue practicing multiplication and division and understand how they are related.

Assign [Multiplication and Division Review | Interactive Worksheet](#) and allow 15 minutes for completion individually.

Review the answers with the whole class.

Distribute [How do Multiplication and Division Relate](#) and model how to complete the worksheet using the first example. Clarify questions.



Allow 20 minutes for completion.

 REFLECTION (10 minutes)

✓ Review the answers with the class and have a few students explain their thought process while completing the second worksheet. If there is time, have a few high-level learners share their completed crossword and model solving one for the whole class.

Lower Level

Consider pairing students up for the second worksheet or walk around and provide individual support and additional time as required.

Higher Level

Assign [Division Crossword | Interactive Worksheet |](#) to challenge students.

GROUP WORK (60 min)

Explain that there are multiple career pathways to choose as a social worker. Use information from the section **17 Types of Social Work Career Fields** from [LCSW, MSW, and More: Social Work Degree Career Guide](#).

Tell students they will work in groups to explore nine different career pathways and create a short presentation to explain what they have learned to the rest of the class.

Divide the class into 9 groups and assign one of the following pathways to each group:

[Forensic Social Worker](#), [Geriatric Social Worker](#), [Hospice Social Worker](#), [Medical Social Worker](#), [Mental Health Social Worker](#), [Military Social Worker](#), [Oncology Social Worker](#), [Psychiatric Social Worker](#), [School Social Worker](#).

Provide the following instructions:

1. For each pathway, go to the assigned link and read only the sections that answer the following questions:
 - ‘What is the <the assigned pathway> ?
 - ‘What do <assigned pathway workers> do?’
 - ‘Where do <assigned pathway workers> work?’
 - ‘How much do <assigned pathway workers> make?’
2. Create a presentation using this information. Choose to create a visual poster or an oral presentation to share your learnings.

Remind students to look for text clues, sub headings, bold print and links within the page to locate the information they require. Walk around and provide support as required.

 REFLECTION (20 minutes)

✓ Have each group present their findings. Ask follow-up questions to encourage students to provide additional information.

Guide a short discussion around how social workers are different from therapists. Use links in the same website to help you. Encourage students to recall prior knowledge on mental health careers from an earlier lesson and connect that to the discussion.

PARTNER WORK TIME (30 min)

Tell students they will work in pairs to practice role-play scenarios where they demonstrate empathy and effective communication. Each student takes a turn being the social worker and the person seeking help.

Provide the following scenarios for students to choose from:

1. You are a social worker helping a parent who is feeling overwhelmed and stressed about taking care of their young children while working from home during the pandemic.
2. You are a social worker in a hospital, and you're talking to a patient who has just received a difficult medical diagnosis.
3. You are a community social worker meeting with a group of neighbors who want to improve safety in their neighborhood.
4. You are a school social worker talking to a student who has been acting out in class and seems upset.

Encourage students to actively listen to the concerns raised when they are playing the role of the social worker. Before beginning the role-plays, ask a few students to share what they understand by active listening and clarify any misconceptions.

Remind students to refer to the How to Communicate Effectively handout for their role-plays.

Lower Level

Pair students with a higher level learner. Provide small group guidance on how they can demonstrate active listening.

Higher Level

Challenge students to apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills to the scenarios while considering the emotional complexities of the situation.

WRAP-UP & REFLECTION (15 min)

Invite students to share their feedback about the lesson, highlighting what interests them, what they liked and what they'd like to learn more about.

Review the lesson objectives and key points.

Distribute exit slips to students.

Ask for a few volunteers to share their reflections.

Collect and review the answers.

How to Communicate Effectively

Directions:

- Read the instructional text below and be prepared to summarize the key points.

Introduction:

As a social worker, communication is a vital skill that helps you connect with and support the people you work with. Here's a step-by-step guide to communicating effectively in your role.

Instructions:

1. **Listen Carefully:** When talking with individuals or families, give them your full attention. Listen to what they're saying without interrupting. This shows that you care and want to understand their needs.
2. **Use Simple Language:** Speak clearly and use words that are easy to understand. Avoid using complicated terms or jargon that might confuse the people you're helping.
3. **Ask Open-ended Questions:** Instead of asking questions that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no," ask questions that encourage them to share more. For example, instead of asking, "Did you have a good day?" try asking, "Can you tell me about your day?"
4. **Show Empathy:** Let them know you understand how they feel. Use phrases like "I understand," "That sounds tough," or "I'm here to support you."
5. **Use Body Language:** Your body language can say a lot. Maintain eye contact, nod to show you're listening, and use friendly facial expressions.
6. **Summarize and Confirm:** After they share their thoughts, summarize what you heard to make sure you got it right. This also shows that you were really listening.
7. **Offer Support:** Let them know about available resources and options. Ask if they have any questions or concerns.
8. **Respect Privacy:** Remember that what they share with you is private. Always keep their information confidential.

Conclusion:

Effective communication is a superpower for social workers. It helps you understand people's needs, offer support, and make a positive impact on their lives. Remember to practice active listening, use simple language, and show empathy in your conversations.

Reflection Exit Slip

In one sentence, describe what you learned in this lesson.

Today, I learned _____.

Is one of the careers discussed today of interest to you? Why or why not?

I liked / did not like _____ career because _____

Is there anything you still need help understanding?

What's one question you have?

Circle the emoji that shows how you feel about your mastery of content in this lesson.



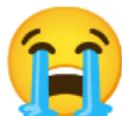
Happy



Smart



Confused



Sad



Angry