Behavioral Health Program Competencies

COMPETENCY 1: DEMONSTRATE ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers use rights-based, antiracist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (BH1)

Social work students should:

BH1.1 Guided by ethical reasoning and self-reflection, demonstrate adherence to the key principles of the Mental Health Services Act and other behavioral health-related laws, policies, and procedures. (See related Competency 5.)

BH1.2 Engage in active dialogue with their practicum instructor regarding behavioral health placement agency policies and culture around behavior, appearance, communication (use of bilingual interventions), and the use of supervision.

BH1.3 Develop and sustain effective collaborative relationships that respect consumer perspectives and self-determination with colleagues and community stakeholders, including consumers of behavioral health services, their family members, others with lived experience in the behavioral health care system, and Tribes.

BH1.4 Effectively manage professional boundary issues and other challenges arising in the course of behavioral health work, particularly ambiguities presented by the multiple roles sometimes characteristic of recovery-oriented practice, trauma, and other highly involved and potentially emotionally triggering aspects of the work.

BH1.5 Develop and sustain relationships with members of interdisciplinary and integrated health care teams, including social workers, primary care providers, psychiatrists, psychologists, behavioral health specialists, substance use disorders treatment staff, Tribal service providers, and others, that reflect clear understanding of their roles in behavioral health settings.

BH1.6 Demonstrate both knowledge of the history and evolution of behavioral health care practice in the United States and California, and a commitment to lifelong learning around this practice.
BH1.7 Follow all ethical guidelines and legal mandates in the use of technology in order to maintain the confidentiality of all personal, behavioral health, and health-related information. Familiarize yourself with documents offered in different languages for consumers.

COMPETENCY 2: ADVANCE HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political,economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (BH2)

Social work students should:
BH2.1 Clearly articulate the systematic effects of discrimination, oppression, and stigma on the behavioral health needs and experiences of service consumers and on the quality and delivery of services offered to them and identify and advocate for policy changes needed to address these issues.
BH2.2 Advocate for changes in policies and programs that reflect a social justice practice framework for facilitating access to providing behavioral health services based on the principles articulated in the Mental Health Services Act and for including support for consumers serving as peer providers and facilitators including bilingual support.
BH2.3 Demonstrate the ability to work effectively in interdisciplinary collaborations to develop and provide interventions that confront stigma and discrimination and provide integrated care to meet the specific needs of diverse behavioral health care consumers. Focusing on bilingual engagement when applicable.
BH2.4 Integrate into all aspects of policy and practice sensitivity to the reality that fundamental rights, including freedom and privacy, may be compromised for consumers who are mandated to receive services within the behavioral health care system, and the goal that services should be provided in the least restrictive environment possible and in the native language of the consumers when applicable.

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

Social workers understand how racism and oppression shape human experiences and how these two constructs influence practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels and in policy and research. Social workers understand the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexualorientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (BH3)

Social work students should:

BH3.1 Engage in critical analysis of the interpersonal, community, and social structural causes and effects of disproportionality, disparities, and inequities in the incidence and trajectory of behavioral health issues, including mental health issues, substance use disorders, and chronic health conditions.

BH3.2 Evidence respectful awareness and understanding of the impact of being a member of a marginalized group on health and behavioral health, and accurately identify differences in access to and quality of available services for members of different communities and populations.

BH3.3 Demonstrate knowledge of diverse cultural norms and traditional methods of recognizing and treating behavioral health issues, and an applied understanding of how these realities affect work with consumers from diverse backgrounds.

BH3.4 Develop and use practice methods that acknowledge, respect, and address how individual and cultural values, norms, and differences impact the various systems with which behavioral health consumers interact, including, but not limited to, families, communities primary care systems, mental and behavioral health care systems, and integrated care systems.

BH3.5 Participate in bi-weekly group discussions to practice conversational engagement with consumers with a Spanish/Hmong-speaking clinical provider and community partner to develop a supportive network and enhance linguistic and cultural confidence.

COMPETENCY 4: ENGAGE IN PRACTICE-INFORMED RESEARCH AND RESEARCH-INFORMED PRACTICE

Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge. Social workers use research to inform their practice decision making and articulate how their practice experience informs research and evaluation decisions. Social workers critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Social workers understand the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers know how to access, critique, and synthesize the current literature to develop appropriate research questions and hypotheses. Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods. Social workers demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research. Social workers can articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (BH4)

Social work students should:

BH4.1 Demonstrate the ability to understand, interpret, and evaluate the benefits and limitations of various evidence based and evidence-informed treatment models as they influence behavioral health practice.

BH4.2 Engage in critical analysis of research findings, practice models, and practice wisdom that inform behavioral health practice, including how research practices have historically failed to address the needs and realities of exploited and/or disadvantaged communities, and how cross-cultural research practices can be used to enhance Equity.

BH4.3 Clearly communicate research findings, conclusions, and implications, as well as their applications to behavioral health practice across a variety of professional interactions with consumers, families, and multidisciplinary service providers (bilingual translation included).

BH4.4 Apply research findings to behavioral health practice with individuals, families, and communities and to the development of professional knowledge about behavioral health, wellness, and recovery with the use of bilingual interpretation when applicable.

COMPETENCY 5: ENGAGE IN POLICY PRACTICE

Social workers identify social policy at the local, state, federal, and global level that affects wellbeing, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Social workers understand and critique the history and current structures of social policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rights based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation within their practice settings with

individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to effect
change in those settings.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (BH5)
Social work students should:
BH5.1 Demonstrate familiarity with relevant statutes, civil codes, and the roles of relevant policy entities, including, but not limited to:

- •The California Mental Health Services Act
- •The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act
- •Other local, state, and federal legislation and policies related to mental health, behavioral health, and treatment parity issues
- •SAMHSA, HRSA, DHHS, and other federal entities
- •CDHCS, CDMHC, and other state entities
- •NAMI and other consumer and family-driven advocacy organizations

BH5.2 Understand and adhere to local policies and procedures that influence behavioral health practice.
BH5.3 Engage with the political and legislative arena of behavioral health through involvement with relevant activities, including, but not limited to:

- •Maintaining ongoing familiarity with changes to behavioral health-related legislation and the rationale for such changes, including reviewing ongoing legislative actions related to the funding and implementation of the MHSA;
- •Reading, analyzing, and communicating in speech and writing about proposed legislation relevant to behavioral health; and
- •Attending Legislative Lobby Day events in Sacramento.

BH5.4 Utilize policy knowledge to effectively develop, implement, and evaluate agency, local, state, and federal policies in the course of behavioral health practice.

COMPETENCY 6: ENGAGE WITH INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, and privilege as well as their personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers use the principles of interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (BH6)
Social work students should:

BH6.1 Appropriately engage and activate behavioral health consumers, their families, and other care providers in the development and coordination of wellness, resilience, and recovery-oriented behavioral health care plans in a variety of service delivery settings and languages..
BH6.2 Effectively utilize interpersonal skills to engage consumers and families in culturally responsive, consumer driven, and trauma-informed integrated behavioral health interventions that address mutually agreed upon goals within a recovery framework in multiple languages when applicable.
BH6.3 Establish effective and appropriate communication, coordination, and advocacy planning with other care providers and interdisciplinary care teams as needed to address mutually agreed upon behavioral health service goals within a recovery framework. Recognizing the complex nature of behavioral health service engagement, ensure that communications with consumers and their families regarding service goals are both sensitive and transparent and in their native language.
BH6.4 Manage affective responses and exercise good judgment around engaging with resistance, trauma responses, and other potentially triggering situations with consumers, their families, and other care providers with an emphasis on the cultural awareness and native language when applicable..

COMPETENCY 7: ASSESS INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying strengths with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision making.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (BH7)
Social work students should:
BH7.1 Identify, understand, and implement appropriate health and behavioral health screening and assessment tools, including population-based screenings and functional assessments used in behavioral health, primary care, integrated behavioral health, and other settings in native language as well when applicable.
BH7.2 Include assessment data from all relevant parties and systems to inform appropriate and comprehensive assessment of differential diagnoses and intervention needs. Relevant parties/systems may include, but are not limited to, consumers, families, communities, primary care, behavioral health, and integrated behavioral health care systems.

BH7.3 Engage in effective and ongoing critical analysis of behavioral health assessment data that:

- •Reflects respect for consumer and family strengths and desires, and facilitates consumer development;
- •Acknowledges the effects of intervention on family and community members;
- •Addresses the interactive and cumulative effects of trauma, adverse health conditions, and co-occurring disorders on behavioral health issues; and
- •Culminates in assessments that address needs for care within the framework of recovery, wellness, and resilience.

BH7.4 Document and maintain all behavioral health assessment data responsibly and balance the need for accurate assessment data with consumer and family privacy concerns and the sensitivity of behavioral health information.

COMPETENCY 8: INTERVENE WITH INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior, person-in-environment, and other interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in selecting culturally responsive interventions with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions and participate in interprofessional collaboration to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (BH8)

Social work students should:

BH8.1 In partnership with consumers and families, develop appropriate intervention plans that reflect the principles of recovery, wellness, and resilience, as well as contemporary theories and models for behavioral health treatment in native language when applicable..

Plans should:

- •Reflect cultural humility and acknowledgement of individualized needs;
- •Incorporate consumer and family strengths;
- •Utilize community resources and natural/peer supports;
- •Incorporate multidisciplinary team supports and interventions;
- •Include non-pharmacological interventions; and
- •Include psychiatric consultation and demonstrate knowledge of issues related to pharmacological interventions.

BH8.2 Apply the principles of teaming, engagement, inquiry, advocacy, and facilitation within interdisciplinary teams and care coordination to the work of supporting consumers, family members, and service providers to accomplish mutually agreed upon intervention goals.

BH8.3 Effectively implement evidence-based interventions in the context of providing emergency response, triage, brief treatment, and longer-term care, and in the course of addressing a range of behavioral health issues presented in behavioral health, primary care,

specialty care, community agency, intensive outpatient, and inpatient treatment settings. Interventions should be guided by the principles of recovery, wellness, and resilience, and should include components such as psychoeducation, problem-solving treatment skills, symptom tracking, medication therapies, follow-up, and relapse prevention.
BH8.4 Effectively plan for interventions in ways that incorporate thoughtfully executed transitions during time-limited internships, recognizing that consumer needs for support may continue beyond these time periods.

COMPETENCY 9: EVALUATE PRACTICE WITH INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITIES

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers evaluate processes and outcomes to increase practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers use qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (BH9)

Social work students should:
BH9.1 Record, track, and monitor consumer engagement, assessment, and intervention data in behavioral health practice accurately and according to practicum education agency policies and guidelines.
BH9.2 Conduct accurate process and outcome analysis of engagement, assessment, and intervention data in behavioral health practice that incorporates consumer perspectives and reflects a focus on the principles of recovery, wellness, and resilience.
BH9.3 Use findings to evaluate intervention effectiveness, develop recommendations for adapting service plans and approaches as needed, improve interdisciplinary team coordination and care integration, and help agency and community policies better support behavioral health consumers and their families.
BH9.4 Share both the purposes of such data collection and the overall results of data analysis with behavioral health care consumers, their family members, and communities whenever possible, with the goal of engaging them more meaningfully in the evaluation process.