Social Work Policy

Seven Challenges in Eight Policy Sectors

- Eight policy sectors “lie at the heart of the American network of social programs and policies” (Jansson, 2015, Reforming Policies in Eight Sectors, para. 2)
- Consumers of social services face seven challenges in each policy sector
- Social workers advocate for policy reform to best serve clients

Levels of Interventions

**Micro**: help individuals navigate systems to access benefits and resources

**Mezzo**: alleviate the need for micro interventions by reforming organizational policies

**Macro**: alleviate the need for micro interventions by reforming legal and federal policies

Eight Policy Sectors

1. **Child and Family** (e.g. foster care)
2. **Health** (e.g. medical coverage)
3. **Gerontology** (e.g. hospice programs)
4. **Mental Health** (e.g. in-patient psychiatric clinic)
5. **Education and Job** (e.g. vocational programs)
6. **Corrections** (e.g. juvenile court)
7. **Safety Net** (e.g. Social Security Administration)
8. **Global** (e.g. United Nations)
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Seven Challenges

1. Ethical Rights
   - Basic survival needs – address income disparities that continue to exacerbate poverty
   - Opportunities - prohibit discrimination and ensure opportunities for education and employment
   - Self-determination: empower individuals through informed consent
   - Accurate and honest information - inform in clear and understandable terms
   - Confidentiality – ensure confidentiality based on HIPPA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) and NASW Code of Ethics
     Equitable treatment – provide the same quality of services to everybody
   - Human rights – safeguard rights in accordance with both federal and international laws
   - Social justice: including, but not limited to, human rights and feminization of poverty

2. Quality Services - Provide evidence-based interventions, increase professional knowledge/skills

3. Culturally Responsive Services
   - Accommodate clients with LEP, illiteracy, sexual orientation, disability
   - Respect preferences for CAM (complementary and alternative medicine) or traditional medicine
   - Know the 4 Cs of culture: what does the client call the problem, what is the cause of problem, how does the client cope, and what are the client’s concerns

4. Preventative Services
   - Primary prevention proactively prevent the emergence of problems or conditions
   - Secondary and tertiary prevention address problems in the early stages of development
   - Passive prevention change the environment without modifying individuals’ behaviors
   - Active prevention require individuals to take specific actions, such as change in diet

5. Access to Services - Remove barriers to service such as affordability, wait periods, eligibility screenings, and geographical distance

6. Mental Health Services - Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 requires employee health insurances to include mental health coverage

7. Relevance to Households and Communities - Provide in-home and in-community services

Adapted from

Created by Elizabeth Baik :: Edited by Jennifer Nichols
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