

Social Work

What is a Social Worker?

Social workers assist individuals, families, groups and communities with enhancing their individual and collective well being. They aim to help people develop their skills and abilities to use their own resources and those of the community to resolve problems.

What do Social Workers do?

The role of the social worker varies according to the setting, but can include the following:

- Provide services to clients as members of multidisciplinary teams or on a one-to-one basis
- Counsel individuals and families to help identify needs and options
- Contribute to the care, treatment and rehabilitation of the well being of individuals in need
- Provide a link between a hospital based treatment team and the family as well as with community resources
- Investigate cases of family violence, child abuse and neglect and take protective action as required. This may involve recruiting foster care, supervising children in protective care, or working on adoption cases
- Assist in social rehabilitation of young and adult offenders as probation or parole officers, where they help ex-prisoners adjust to life in the community
- Offer services on a fee-for service basis to individuals, families or organizations. This can include counselling, psychotherapy, mediation, sex therapy, policy and program development or organizational development

Where do Social Workers work?

Social workers can work in general and psychiatric hospitals, school boards, child welfare agencies, family service and counselling agencies, health and community services centres, correctional facilities, private practice, government.

Education and Preparation

Most provinces require a minimum 4 year undergraduate Bachelor of Social Work degree. An additional year of graduate study is required for the Master of Social Work (MSW) degree. Those holding a non-social work undergraduate degree must complete two years of study for a Master of Social Work degree.

Professional Associations

Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers

<http://www.ocswssw.org/>

Ontario Association of Social Workers

<http://www.oasw.org/>

Licensure

Social workers are regulated by the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act* under the Ministry of Community and Social Services. This Act requires that anyone who calls themselves a social worker must belong to the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers. The initials RSW (Registered Social Worker) appear after their name.