


Ontario College of  
Social Workers and  
Social Service Workers



Ordre des travailleurs  
sociaux et des techniciens  
en travail social de l'Ontario

**Connecting Competencies  
and Professional Practice**

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## Agenda

- Introduction
- 2009 ASWB Practice Analysis
- 2011 CCSWR Competency Project
- Issues
- Next Steps
- Questions

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## Introduction

**Competencies:**

- Skills that are essential to perform certain functions
- A set of behaviours that encompass skills, knowledge, abilities and personal attributes that, taken together, are critical to successful work accomplishment.

**Occupational Standard:**

- the skills, knowledge and abilities required for an occupation as established by a regulatory authority and against which the qualifications of an individual are assessed

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### 2009 ASWB Practice Analysis

- What: survey to determine minimum knowledge and skills necessary to perform social work safely at various educational and experience levels.
- Why: to shape the blueprints for the ASWB examinations
- Who: 16,040 North American social workers
- When: 2008-2009, results released 2010

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### 2009 ASWB Practice Analysis

Process:

- 21 subject matter experts review list of social work tasks from previous practice analysis (Practice Analysis Task Force – PATF)
- Pilot study with PAFT Members
- Final survey sent to 16,000 Canadian & American social workers

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### 2009 ASWB Practice Analysis

Process (cont'd):

- PATF links tasks to exam content competency
- Passing Score Panel reviews anchor examinations to determine pass-fail determinations
- New content outlines for examinations
- New examinations released January 2011

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## 2009 ASWB Practice Analysis

### Canadian vs US Respondents:

- Response Rate: Canada – 39.3% US – 40.1%
- Level of Practice:
  - Canada: Bachelors (53%) Masters (20%)
  - US: Clinical (43%) Masters (32%)
- Practice Setting:
  - Canada Public Institutions (65%)
  - US Not-for-profit (43%)

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## 2009 ASWB Practice Analysis

- Canadian vs US Respondents:
- Highest Degree:
  - Canadians: BSW (53%)
  - US: MSW (85%)
- Practice Field:
  - Canadians: Mental Health (20%)
  - US: Mental Health (30%)
- Primary Role:
  - Both: Direct Service Provider (65%)

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## 2009 ASWB Practice Analysis Exam Content Results

| Content  | Bachelors | Masters | Advanced Generalist        | Clinical                                 |
|--|-----------|---------|----------------------------|--|
| Human Development Diversity and Behaviour in the Environment | 27%       | 28%     | 18%                        | 31%                                      |
| Assessment   | 28%       | 24%     | 22%                        | 26%                                      |
| Direct/Indirect Practice                                     | 26%       | 21%     | 18% (micro)<br>18% (macro) | 25% (Psychotherapy, Clinical, Case Mgmt) |
| Relationships Values & Ethics                                | 19%       | 27%     | 24%                        | 18%                                      |

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### 2011 CCSWR Competency Project

- What: survey to determine entry level competencies for safe social work practice
- Why: labour mobility; assessment of international social work credentials
- Who: 35,000 registered/licensed social workers in Canada
- When: June 2011

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### 2011 CCSWR Competency Project

#### Process:

- Document review: a review of relevant online and printed Canadian documents, reports, websites, and other publications produced in English and French since 1995, including some US-based and international publications
- included ASWB Practice Analysis results & Competency Profile developed by Quebec regulatory authority
- Developed preliminary list of competencies
- Reviewed and revised by Steering Committee (5 CCSWR members)

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### 2011 CCSWR Competency Project

#### Process (cont'd)

- Expert Panel Review: 1 panel consisted of practitioners from across Canada; 2<sup>nd</sup> panel consisted of all Deans & Directors of Canadian social work programs.
- List of competencies further revised by Steering Committee
- Pilot test with CCSWR members
- Survey finalized
- Survey 35, 000 Canadian registered/licensed social workers
- Results expected in early 2012

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## Issues

### Competence vs Competencies:

- Defining competencies represents a de-professionalization of the social work profession
- Competency based approach inconsistent with anti-oppressive practice
- Reduces key concepts to a series of measurable actions
- Intellectual knowledge, critical thinking, social justice focus may be lost

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## Issues

### Financial Imperatives:

- Represents a shift in power from social work professionals (academics & practitioners) to those holding the purse strings (e.g. Market driven approach)
- Employer's need for "job-ready" graduate
- Fragments roles into tasks to be completed by a more technologically oriented (and less expensive) workforce

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## Issues

### Mobility and Regulation:

- Credential vs Competency Assessment
- Transportability of credential vs globalize professional standards
- Government requirements: mutual recognition of credentials

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## Issues

Support for Competency Profiles/Frameworks?

- Council for Social Work Education
- Regulators
- American Board of Examiners in Clinical Social Work
- Universities (e.g. University of Washington)

Is the issue how a competency profile is understood, constructed and applied that is critical?

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## 2011 CCSWR Competency Project

Next Steps:

- Conduct survey: June 2011
- Analyze and communicate results
- Finalize competency profile
- Competency profile approved by all Canadian Regulatory Authorities as an entry to practice requirement

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## Questions?




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