

THE SOCIAL WORK TOOLKIT

MODULE GUIDE

This document is designed to provide suggestions for materials and resources to use with your students from The Social Work Toolkit. It is based upon typical introductory Social Work modules. Please bear in mind, these are only suggestions and there are many other resources to choose from.

For each module we have suggested the most relevant theme on The Social Work Toolkit and highlighted a few key resources that you might like to direct your students to.

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If you cannot see the resources when you follow any of the links in this guide, you may need to login to The Social Work Toolkit first or access via your institution's network. For access information, click [here](#).

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YOUR MODULE: Assessment, Planning and Intervention

SWT THEME: Assessment and Intervention

Assessment and intervention are two of the core processes in social work. This theme on The Social Work Toolkit offers an array of resources which bring together the many elements of the processes of assessment and intervention.

Starting Out: Planning and thinking about your approach

→ Knowing where to begin and what direction to take can be one of the hardest aspects of assessment and intervention. Your students can use the resources in this topic area to help you consider preparation techniques and to reflect on approaches to practice.

- [Preparing to meet with service users](#) (Quick Guide / PDF)
- [Personal safety on a home visit](#) (Quick Guide / PDF)
- [How do you personally prepare for an assessment?](#) (Preparation for Practice / Video)
- [How do you decide which theory or theories to use?](#) (Expert Opinion / Video)

Risk, Needs and Decision Making

→ Social workers cannot consider assessment and intervention without appreciating the risks to, and needs of, the service user. Consideration of these will help with making decisions, but the process of 'decision making' still is complex. Your students can discover more about models, options and frameworks for coping with risks, needs and decision making in this topic area.

- [A framework for decision making](#) (Quick Guide / PDF)
- [Risk assessment](#) (Quick Guide / PDF)
- ["...I had to be critically aware of the processes involved in making sound decisions..."](#) (Case Study / Audio)
- [How do you approach decision making on placement?](#) (Preparation for Practice / Video)
- [Assessing risk: what would you do?](#) (Case Study / Click and Reveal Activity)

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Assessment

→ Part of the social worker's role is to facilitate the assessment process to ensure the best information is gained in order to use their expertise to define a problem and find the best solution or intervention. In this topic area your students can learn more about assessment.

- [Assessment in social work](#) (Preparation for Practice / PDF)
- [What lessons did you learn from your first assessment?](#) (Preparation for Practice / Video)
- [Do you feel involved in assessment as a service user?](#) (Expert Opinion / Video)
- [Effective assessment processes](#) (Book Chapter / PDF)

Tools for assessment and intervention

→ Ensuring students understand the theory, models and approaches of assessment and intervention is important, however having knowledge of the tools at their disposal when undertaking these processes is incredibly useful to ensure they work efficiently. Students can increase their understanding by using the resources in this topic area.

- [Care planning in adult services](#) (Quick Guide / PDF):
This quick guide created by Victoria Hart, a social worker, allows students to learn more about the care planning framework, and is presented as a handy flowchart.
- [Genograms](#) (Quick Guide / PDF):
This quick guide acts a handy reference for the common symbols used and how these can be utilised to construct a genogram.
- [The assessment task and process: factors that promote and inhibit a child focus](#) (Book Chapter / PDF):
In this chapter from 'Child Neglect: Identification and Assessment', Jan Horwath discusses the evidence-base that informs the assessment process and the importance of engaging with the process to protect the child.

Intervention

→ Offering the best solution to meet the needs of a service user is a complex process, but intervention is often needed to change a service user's life for the better. Ask students to explore the resources in this topic area and the different approaches suggested to improve their understanding intervention.

- [How did a social worker's intervention support you in taking control of your own life?](#) (Expert Opinion / Video)
- [Crisis intervention](#) (Quick Guide / PDF)
- ["I barely had capacity to spend significant time on my other cases."](#) (Case Study / Audio)

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Endings

→ Endings occur for many different reasons, perhaps for workload management reasons, because your students are finishing a placement or even moving jobs. Ending their involvement can be difficult for your students as well as the service user; however if they can prepare for endings, difficulties can be minimised.

- [Ending intervention](#) (Quick Guide / PDF)
- [Ending intervention: a social worker's viewpoint](#) (Expert Opinion / Video)

Go to the [Assessment and Intervention](#) theme page to browse the full list of resources in this section!

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YOUR MODULE: Ethics and Values

SWT THEME: Ethics, Values and Diversity

Social work practice often contains complex dilemmas. It is not always simple to identify 'the right way' of dealing with a situation. There are many considerations for practising professionally, without discrimination. Therefore it is imperative students understand the key areas of ethics, values and diversity - themes which underpin professional practice.

Your professional role and value base

→ The resources in this topic offer context in which professional practice operates, offering introductory information about the role of law and policy and working in a diverse society:

- [Putting professional values into practice](#) (Preparation for Practice / PDF)
- [Reconciling your personal and professional values](#) (Expert Opinion / PDF)
- [Accountability in social work](#) (Expert Opinion / PDF)
- [What does being professional mean to you?](#) (Preparation for Practice / Video):

Ethics and values

→ Having an acute awareness of ethical principles is an important asset as a social worker, and these then sit alongside the personal and professional value base. Collectively, ethics and values are therefore an important guiding force in your practice. Your students can learn more about each of these elements from the resources in this section, including:

- ["I felt this blurred the professional boundaries..."](#) (Case Study / Audio)
- [What can you do when the law and ethical issues collide?](#) (Expert Opinion / Video)
- [Do you agree with the centre manager's decision?](#) (Case Study / Click and Reveal Activity)
- [Anti-oppressive ethics and ethical thinking](#) (Book Chapter / PDF)

Empowerment and partnership

→ Creating effective partnerships and empowering the service user in doing so is a fundamental principle in social work. To help them better understand the goal of partnership working and the challenges and rewards of service-user involvement, ask your students to visit these resources:

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- [Working in partnership](#) (Expert Opinion / PDF)
- ["I felt pulled in three different directions and wasn't sure what my next step should be."](#) (Case Study / Audio)
- [Have you ever needed to advocate on behalf of a service user?](#) (Preparation for Practice / Video):
- [Empowering relationships](#) (Book Chapter / PDF)

Diversity and equality

→ Valuing diversity and promoting equality underpins a social worker's commitment to ensuring everyone is treated with respect. Ask your students to take time to explore these resources and consider these important and sensitive issues, these are useful starting points:

- [Legal perspectives on anti-discriminatory practice](#) (Expert Opinion / PDF)
- [How can you promote good practice when working with gay, lesbian and bisexual service users?](#) (Expert Opinion / Video)
- [Work With Service Users](#) (Book Chapter / PDF)

Go to the [Ethics, Values and Diversity](#) theme page to browse the full list of resources in this section!

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YOUR MODULE: Human Growth and Development/Lifespan Development

SWT THEME: Lifecourse Perspectives

Social workers need to be aware of the range of social, psychological and physical processes that can affect people's levels of vulnerability and need. The resources in this theme show how knowledge of human growth and development can constructively inform their practice.

Working across the lifecourse

→ The point people are at now is always affected by the journey they have come on and the social network surrounding them. In considering change, their futures are also at stake. The resources collected in this topic area are about 'looking at the whole picture', they include:

- [Attachment theory across the lifecourse](#) (Expert Opinion / Video)
- [Psychosocial perspectives on the lifecourse](#) (Expert Opinion / Video)
- [Ecological theories of human development](#) (Book chapter / PDF)

Working with children and families

→ Working with children and families presents its own distinct set of issues and challenges. This topic area presents some tools that help equip students to deal with the complexities:

- [Assessing parental care-giving](#) (Preparation for Practice / PDF)
- [Relationships and trust](#) (Expert Opinion / Video)
- [Establishing a day in the life of a school age child](#) (Preparation for Practice / PDF)

Working with adults

→ In social work with adults, establishing appropriate levels of support tailored to individual needs can be difficult. The resources in this topic area should help students to undertake this multi-faceted task:

- [Safeguarding older people](#) (Case Study / PDF)
- [Living with a dementia diagnosis](#) (Expert Opinion / Video)
- [A theoretical perspective on social work and substance use](#) (Book Chapter / PDF)

Go to the [Lifecourse Perspectives](#) theme page to browse the full list of resources in this section!

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YOUR MODULE: Social Work Practice

SWT THEME: Professionalism in Practice

Whether taught as part of a Social Work Practice module or separately, Professionalism in Practice is a key aspect of any social work course. This theme brings together a range of confidence-building resources to support students through placement and build their capability as a practitioner. The focus is on the key elements of the placement experience but it also allows students to consider professional development in a wider context and as part of the first steps in their longer-term career.

Getting the most out of your placement

→ Whether your students are preparing for or have started their first or second placement, the resources offered in the **Getting the Most Out of Your Placement** topic area will support them to make the most of their time out in practice. These are just a few of the resources you could direct them to:

- [What do I need to learn from placement?](#) (Preparation for Practice / PDF)
- [The dos and don'ts of creating and using your learning agreement](#) (Quick Guide / PDF)
- [How do you manage your time on placement?](#) (Preparation for Practice / Video)
- [How do you take responsibility for your own learning on placement?](#) (Preparation for Practice / Video)
- [How will your relationship with your practice educator progress through placements?](#) (Expert Opinion / Video)

Being assessed

→ The resources in this topic area support different elements of student assessment and provide guidance in case things go wrong. **Being Assessed** includes student and service user perspectives, in particular you could direct your students to:

- [Self-assessing your professional development](#) (Preparation for Practice / PDF)
- ["It really feels like the placement is falling apart around me..."](#) (Case Study / Audio)
- [What are your hints and tips for creating a portfolio?](#) (Preparation for Practice / Video)
- [As service users, how are you involved in assessing fitness for practice?](#) (Expert Opinion / Video)

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Critically reflective practice

→ The Social Work Reform Board recommendations and the Munro Report both highlight the importance of critical reflection as part of a social worker's role. These resources are designed to inspire effective critical reflection – these are just a few for your students to begin with:

- [Reflecting on practice](#) (Preparation for Practice / PDF)
- [Reflective writing](#) (Quick Guide / PDF)
- [Questions for seeking feedback](#) (Preparation for Practice / PDF)
- [When and how do you reflect on your placement experiences?](#) (Preparation for Practice / Video)

Supervision

→ Being supervised is an important chance for a social worker to access advice and support and an opportunity for shared-decision making. Ask your students to explore the resources in this topic area to get the most from their supervision.

- [Effective supervision on placement](#) (Expert Opinion / PDF)
- [What I expect from our supervision sessions](#) (Expert Opinion / Video)
- [A supervision session in progress](#) (Expert Opinion / Video)
- [Taking the temperature of your relationship with your supervisor](#) (Quiz)

Developing your professional identity

→ Being an effective social worker involves a wide array of skills and expertise as well as focus and resilience. Reflecting on how they rise to the challenges, and what and who influences their practice are key elements of your students' professional development. They can learn more about how to develop and grow professionally using the collection of resources in this area. These are good starting points:

- [Professional resilience in social work](#) (Expert Opinion / PDF)
- [The social worker I'd like to be](#) (Preparation for Practice / Activity)
- [Managing professional boundaries](#) (Case Study / Click and Reveal Activity)
- [Facing the challenge](#) (Book Chapter / PDF)
- [Are you managing your professional boundaries appropriately?](#) (Quiz)

Working in multi-disciplinary contexts

→ Social work involves liaising with a wide variety of agencies and professions. There can be valuable opportunities for collaboration, but also challenges to understand and manage different perspectives and expectations. Ask your students to explore the resources in this area to learn how to forge successful multi-professional partnerships.

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- [Handling conflicting expectations in a multi-disciplinary setting](#) (Preparation for Practice / PDF)
- [The legal framework for multi-professional working](#) (Expert Opinion / PDF)
- ["It turns out that people think I am too single-minded..."](#) (Case Study / Audio)

Go to the [Professionalism in Practice](#) theme page to browse the full list of resources in this section!

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YOUR MODULE: Social Work Skills and Methods

SWT THEME: Communication Skills

A key aspect of this module will be ensuring that your students are able to communicate as clearly and as effectively as possible. The theme, **Communication Skills**, explores some of the key topics you'll want your students to engage with before your skills development workshops or going out on placement.

Effective professional communication

→ It's important social workers are able to communicate effectively, especially with service users. Ask your students to look at the following resources under the **Effective professional communication** topic to help develop these skills:

- [Meeting a service user for the first time](#) (Quick Guide / PDF)
- ["All I could see was a posh woman in a suit..."](#) (Case Study / Audio)
- [How have you used your communication skills to build a relationship with a new service user?](#) (Preparation for Practice / Video)

Forms of communication

→ It's important your students consider the *forms* of communication they will be using and how these might differ when used in a professional context. Direct them towards the **Forms of communication** topic for some invaluable advice from Ruben Martin, in particular:

- [The dos and don'ts of using email and telephone](#) (Quick Guide / PDF)
- [Professional writing in social work](#) (PDF)
- [Communicating effectively: what would you do?](#) (Click and Reveal Activity)

Person-centred listening

→ Effective listening and empathy are key skills students may need to develop. Ask them to visit the **Person-centred listening** topic to discover how this can impact on the service users' experiences. There are lots of useful resources here, including:

- [How well do you think social workers listen?](#) (Expert Opinion / Video)
- [How well do you listen?](#) (Preparation for Practice / PDF)
- [The dos and don'ts of listening](#) (Quick Guide / PDF)
- [Communicating with children](#) (Expert Opinion / Video)

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Gathering and sharing information

→ Ask your students to visit the **Gathering and sharing information** topic and browse the resources – particularly the sections on what skills you need to check understanding and the different types of questions you can ask. The ask them to complete the following activities to demonstrate their understanding:

- ["To begin with, I'd like you to tell me a little bit about what actually happened."](#) (Case Study Role Play / PDF)
- [Managing Confidentiality](#) (Quiz)

Coping with communication barriers

→ For all their preparation students will still encounter difficulties when on visits. Ask them to visit the **Coping with communication barriers** topic for guidance on how one might effectively cope with these. They may find the experiences of practitioners and service users especially useful:

- ["These guys were not aggressive, in fact quite the opposite."](#) (Case Study / Audio)
- [How have you coped with communication difficulties on placement?](#) (Preparation for Practice / Video)
- [As a person with hearing difficulties, how do you expect a social worker to communicate with you?](#) (Expert Opinion / Video)

Go to the [Communication Skills](#) theme page to browse the full list of resources in this section!