

Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Clinical Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

This is a sample study guide. To access the full version with hundreds of questions,

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Don't worry about getting everything right, your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations, and take breaks to retain information better.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning.

7. Use Other Tools

Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly — adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

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Questions

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- 1. A man recently fired from his job is primarily focused on financial stress. What should the social worker expect regarding his unemployment?**
 - A. It will result in negative financial impact**
 - B. It will affect his physical and mental health**
 - C. It will cause worry about future employment**
 - D. It will build resiliency for future crises**
- 2. Upon intake, how should a social worker initially respond to a client expressing self-harming feelings?**
 - A. Conduct a safety assessment**
 - B. Acknowledge feelings and concerns**
 - C. Refer to a psychiatrist for evaluation**
 - D. Determine reasons for her feelings**
- 3. Which of the following is NOT true about personality disorders?**
 - A. They are characterized by distorted patterns of thinking.**
 - B. They involve over- or underregulated impulse control.**
 - C. They cause interpersonal difficulties.**
 - D. They are usually diagnosed in childhood.**
- 4. Which assessment tool should be used to determine a client's global functioning according to the DSM-5?**
 - A. A. Global Assessment of Functioning Scale (GAF)**
 - B. B. World Health Organization Disability Assessment Schedule 2.0 (WHODAS 2.0)**
 - C. C. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator**
 - D. D. Thematic Apperception Test**
- 5. Which medication is associated with an increased risk of agranulocytosis?**
 - A. Lexapro**
 - B. Lithium**
 - C. Clozaril**
 - D. Xanax**

- 6. Which of the following medications is used to treat alcoholism by making clients feel ill if they consume alcohol while taking it?**
- A. Clozaril**
 - B. Effexor**
 - C. Antabuse**
 - D. Topamax**
- 7. Which assessment is generally prioritized in social work with adolescents?**
- A. A. Educational achievement assessment**
 - B. B. Family dynamics evaluation**
 - C. C. Emotional and behavioral assessment**
 - D. D. Peer relationship analysis**
- 8. In object relations theory, the normal symbiotic phase lasts until what age?**
- A. 5 months**
 - B. 2 years**
 - C. 5 years**
 - D. 2 weeks**
- 9. What is the primary ethical consideration for a social worker when terminating services due to nonpayment?**
- A. Ensure that the client is fully informed of the process**
 - B. Offer additional payment plans before termination**
 - C. Assess the risk of harm to the client during termination**
 - D. Provide referrals to other service providers**
- 10. According to Erikson, what is the sequence of relationship formation in psychosocial development?**
- A. Attachment-autonomy-intimacy**
 - B. Intimacy-attachment-autonomy**
 - C. Autonomy-attachment-intimacy**
 - D. Intimacy-autonomy-attachment**

Answers

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1. B
2. A
3. D
4. B
5. C
6. C
7. C
8. A
9. A
10. A

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Explanations

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1. A man recently fired from his job is primarily focused on financial stress. What should the social worker expect regarding his unemployment?

- A. It will result in negative financial impact**
- B. It will affect his physical and mental health**
- C. It will cause worry about future employment**
- D. It will build resiliency for future crises**

Focusing on the context of unemployment, the correct answer highlights the significant impact that losing a job can have on an individual's physical and mental health. When someone experiences unemployment, especially under stressful circumstances like being fired, it often leads to a host of psychological issues such as anxiety, depression, and decreased self-esteem. These mental health challenges can be compounded by physical health problems due to stress, lack of routine, or reduced access to healthcare when financial resources diminish. The other responses address valid concerns related to unemployment; however, the primary emphasis on health presents a broader scope of consequences beyond immediate financial stress. While financial impact and worries about future employment are certainly significant, they are often interlinked with changes in mental health and can exacerbate physical health issues. The idea of building resilience is a more optimistic perspective that may not be the immediate focus for someone dealing with the current stressors brought on by losing a job. Thus, understanding the comprehensive effects of unemployment requires recognizing that physical and mental health considerations are at the forefront of this situation.

2. Upon intake, how should a social worker initially respond to a client expressing self-harming feelings?

- A. Conduct a safety assessment**
- B. Acknowledge feelings and concerns**
- C. Refer to a psychiatrist for evaluation**
- D. Determine reasons for her feelings**

The primary goal upon intake when a client expresses self-harming feelings is to ensure their immediate safety and well-being. Conducting a safety assessment is critical because it allows the social worker to evaluate the client's level of risk for self-harm and to identify any urgent interventions that may be necessary. This assessment may include direct questions about suicidal thoughts, plans, or previous self-harming behaviors. By prioritizing safety, the social worker can better understand the severity of the situation and take appropriate actions, such as creating a safety plan or providing referrals for immediate support or crisis intervention if needed. This procedure aligns with the ethical responsibility of social workers to protect clients from harm. While acknowledging the client's feelings and concerns is important and can help build rapport, it does not address the immediate risk their self-harming feelings pose. Referring to a psychiatrist for evaluation or determining the reasons for their feelings can be beneficial in the longer term but should follow a thorough safety assessment to ensure the client is not in immediate danger. Thus, the focus on conducting a safety assessment underscores the critical importance of immediate risk management in situations involving self-harm.

3. Which of the following is NOT true about personality disorders?

- A. They are characterized by distorted patterns of thinking.**
- B. They involve over- or underregulated impulse control.**
- C. They cause interpersonal difficulties.**
- D. They are usually diagnosed in childhood.**

Personality disorders are complex mental health conditions that typically manifest in early adulthood rather than childhood. These disorders are characterized by enduring patterns of behavior, cognition, and inner experience that deviate from cultural expectations and lead to significant impairment or distress. While traits and tendencies that may later align with a personality disorder can be observed during childhood or adolescence, a formal diagnosis is usually made when individuals are older, as personality traits continue to develop and solidify during adolescence and into early adulthood. The other aspects of personality disorders, such as distorted patterns of thinking, issues with impulse control, and interpersonal difficulties, are key characteristics that accurately describe these disorders. These traits can significantly affect a person's ability to function socially and personally, contributing to the challenges faced in relationships and daily life. Hence, the statement regarding the typical age of onset being childhood is not accurate in the context of diagnosis.

4. Which assessment tool should be used to determine a client's global functioning according to the DSM-5?

- A. A. Global Assessment of Functioning Scale (GAF)**
- B. B. World Health Organization Disability Assessment Schedule 2.0 (WHODAS 2.0)**
- C. C. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator**
- D. D. Thematic Apperception Test**

The World Health Organization Disability Assessment Schedule 2.0 (WHODAS 2.0) is the most appropriate assessment tool for determining a client's global functioning according to the DSM-5. This tool provides a comprehensive framework for measuring disability across various dimensions of functioning, including cognition, mobility, self-care, and interpersonal relationships. It is designed to assess the impact of health conditions on functional activities and is aligned with the biopsychosocial model, which encompasses biological, psychological, and social factors contributing to a person's overall functioning. WHODAS 2.0 captures both the severity of disability and the individual's perceived ability to function in daily life, making it a valuable asset for clinicians in assessing global functioning. Its standardized format allows for consistent and reliable evaluation across different populations and settings, thus helping clinicians to tailor treatment approaches and monitor progress over time. Other assessment tools listed, such as the Global Assessment of Functioning Scale (GAF), while previously utilized, are not used in the DSM-5. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is focused on personality types rather than functioning. The Thematic Apperception Test is a projective psychological test that explores themes and emotions rather than providing a measure of global functioning.

5. Which medication is associated with an increased risk of agranulocytosis?

- A. Lexapro**
- B. Lithium**
- C. Clozaril**
- D. Xanax**

Clozaril, also known as clozapine, is an atypical antipsychotic that is particularly associated with an increased risk of agranulocytosis, which is a potentially life-threatening condition characterized by a dangerously low level of neutrophils (a type of white blood cell). Patients prescribed clozapine require regular monitoring of their white blood cell counts to detect any drops in neutrophil levels early on. The risk of agranulocytosis with clozapine makes it unique among antipsychotics, as other medications in the same class generally have a lower risk of this adverse effect. In contrast, the other medications listed do not carry the same risk for agranulocytosis. Lexapro, an antidepressant, is not linked to this condition, and while lithium has its own array of side effects and requires monitoring, agranulocytosis is not commonly associated with it. Xanax, a benzodiazepine, also does not have a connection to agranulocytosis. Understanding these distinctions is vital for safe prescribing practices and for monitoring patients appropriately when they are on medications with these potential risks.

6. Which of the following medications is used to treat alcoholism by making clients feel ill if they consume alcohol while taking it?

- A. Clozaril**
- B. Effexor**
- C. Antabuse**
- D. Topamax**

The medication that is used to treat alcoholism by inducing unpleasant effects when alcohol is consumed is Antabuse, also known by its generic name disulfiram. Antabuse works by inhibiting the enzyme acetaldehyde dehydrogenase, which is involved in the metabolism of alcohol. When a person takes Antabuse and then consumes alcohol, the process of breaking down alcohol is impaired, leading to a buildup of acetaldehyde. This buildup causes uncomfortable and potentially severe reactions such as flushing, nausea, vomiting, and palpitations. This aversive reaction serves as a deterrent to drinking, making it a useful option in the treatment of alcohol use disorder. Other medications mentioned, such as Clozaril, Effexor, and Topamax, have different uses and mechanisms. Clozaril is primarily used for schizophrenia, Effexor is an antidepressant used for depression and anxiety disorders, and Topamax is anticonvulsant that may be used for mood stabilization, but not specifically for creating an aversive reaction to alcohol. Hence, they do not serve the same purpose as Antabuse in the treatment of alcoholism.

7. Which assessment is generally prioritized in social work with adolescents?

- A. A. Educational achievement assessment**
- B. B. Family dynamics evaluation**
- C. C. Emotional and behavioral assessment**
- D. D. Peer relationship analysis**

The prioritization of emotional and behavioral assessment in social work with adolescents is rooted in the understanding that this age group often experiences significant emotional and psychological changes. Adolescents are navigating the complexities of identity formation, peer relationships, and increasing independence, which can lead to a variety of emotional and behavioral challenges. By focusing on emotional and behavioral assessments, social workers can identify issues such as anxiety, depression, and behavioral disorders that may be impacting the adolescent's overall well-being and functioning. This assessment is crucial because it not only aids in creating an accurate profile of the adolescent's mental health needs but also helps in developing effective intervention strategies tailored to their specific situation. While assessments of educational achievement, family dynamics, and peer relationships are certainly important in a comprehensive evaluation of an adolescent's life, understanding their emotional and behavioral state is fundamental. This perspective allows for early detection of issues that might otherwise escalate, leading to more effective support and resources that promote healthier development during this critical stage of life.

8. In object relations theory, the normal symbiotic phase lasts until what age?

- A. 5 months**
- B. 2 years**
- C. 5 years**
- D. 2 weeks**

In object relations theory, the normal symbiotic phase generally lasts until around 5 months of age. During this developmental phase, infants are seen as being in a close, fused relationship with their primary caregiver, typically the mother. The infant does not yet differentiate itself as a separate entity from the caregiver, and their experiences are largely centered around this connection. This phase is crucial for early emotional development, as it establishes the foundation for future relationships and the child's ability to perceive others as distinct individuals. During this time, the infant relies heavily on the caregiver for both emotional and physical needs. The transition from this symbiotic phase occurs as the infant begins to develop a sense of self and starts to recognize the caregiver as a separate object, marking the beginning of a more differentiated relationship. As for the other timelines presented in the options, 2 weeks and 5 years extend beyond the typical duration of this phase, while 2 years represents a later developmental period when the child is expected to have moved past the symbiotic phase into more complex stages of relationship-building and independence.

9. What is the primary ethical consideration for a social worker when terminating services due to nonpayment?

- A. Ensure that the client is fully informed of the process**
- B. Offer additional payment plans before termination**
- C. Assess the risk of harm to the client during termination**
- D. Provide referrals to other service providers**

The primary ethical consideration for a social worker when terminating services due to nonpayment is to ensure that the client is fully informed of the process. Transparency in communication is key to maintaining a professional and ethical relationship with clients. Informing the client about the termination of services due to nonpayment helps them understand the reason for the cessation, the implications for their ongoing care, and any possibilities for reconciliation or re-engagement. In this context, providing a clear explanation of the termination process respects the client's right to know and participate in decisions affecting their care. It also allows them the opportunity to address their financial situation, seek alternative options, or explore any misunderstandings related to their payment or service agreement. Other options, while they may be important considerations in different contexts, do not address the central ethical obligation of clear and open communication with the client about the termination process itself.

10. According to Erikson, what is the sequence of relationship formation in psychosocial development?

- A. Attachment-autonomy-intimacy**
- B. Intimacy-attachment-autonomy**
- C. Autonomy-attachment-intimacy**
- D. Intimacy-autonomy-attachment**

The sequence of relationship formation in psychosocial development as proposed by Erikson begins with attachment, then progresses to autonomy, and finally leads to intimacy. Attachment refers to the emotional bonds formed in early childhood, primarily between a child and their caregiver. This foundational stage is crucial, as it establishes the sense of security and trust that can influence all subsequent relationships. A strong attachment fosters a healthy sense of self and interpersonal relationships. Following attachment, autonomy develops as an individual begins to assert their independence and make choices for themselves. This stage is vital for developing confidence and self-reliance, which are essential for healthy relationship dynamics. Finally, intimacy involves the ability to form close, emotional connections with others, often seen in romantic relationships. Successfully navigating previous stages of attachment and autonomy enables individuals to engage in deeper, more meaningful relationships without fear of emotional vulnerability. This sequence emphasizes the importance of building a strong foundation of trust and independence before one can effectively engage in intimate relationships.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://aswb-clinical.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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