

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

## Study Guide



**Everything you need from our exam experts!**

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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. 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.**

## **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. 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!**

## Questions

- 1. Upon discharge from hospitalization, a client showed extreme despair and later agitation. Which medication is most likely prescribed?**
  - A. Lithium**
  - B. Elavil**
  - C. Ativan**
  - D. Haldol**
- 2. What classification system evaluates clients using various personal and environmental factors?**
  - A. Social role functioning**
  - B. Mental and physical health**
  - C. Environmental problems**
  - D. Psychiatric pathology**
- 3. Which of the following is NOT an appropriate group for genetic counseling?**
  - A. Couples with a child having an inherited disorder**
  - B. Women with multiple miscarriages**
  - C. New mothers who have suffered postpartum depression**
  - D. Men aware of a family history of birth defects**
- 4. When a social worker and client are from different ethnic or racial groups, what should the social worker prioritize?**
  - A. Recognize the differences and understand how they may impact on the treatment process**
  - B. Engage in supervision and/or consultation with a member of that ethnic or racial group**
  - C. Understand the customs and beliefs that are universal to those from that ethnic or racial group**
  - D. Ask the client if this is a problem prior to starting treatment**

- 5. How is the role of a social worker best described when engaged in crisis intervention?**
- A. Short-term support focused on restoring clients' psychological capacities**
  - B. Long-term support to ensure clients are able to address all aspects of trauma**
  - C. Passively involved acting as a resource for any concerns or problems**
  - D. Highly involved and focused on meeting the clients' basic needs**
- 6. When are social workers permitted to terminate services?**
- A. When they wish to pursue social relationships with clients**
  - B. When they leave employment settings to pursue other opportunities**
  - C. When they believe clients are making poor choices**
  - D. When owed money for services**
- 7. Which of the following is NOT an indicator of ego strength?**
- A. Taking responsibility for actions**
  - B. Dealing with mood changes**
  - C. Accepting limitations and being accountable**
  - D. Blaming others**
- 8. What is the ethical consideration of a social worker who dates a supervisee after their professional relationship ends?**
- A. Unethical due to dual relationship**
  - B. Ethical since the supervisee left the agency**
  - C. Unethical because the relationship led to marriage**
  - D. Ethical given that it only prohibits client interactions**
- 9. What action should a social worker take when faced with an ethical dilemma involving a former personal relationship?**
- A. Discuss the dilemma with a peer for guidance**
  - B. Accept the request only if they are comfortable**
  - C. Refer the individual to another professional**
  - D. Begin therapy without hesitation**



**10. What follows after an assessment is completed according to the problem-solving process?**

- A. Intervention**
- B. Evaluation**
- C. Planning**
- D. Engagement**

## **Answers**

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. Upon discharge from hospitalization, a client showed extreme despair and later agitation. Which medication is most likely prescribed?**

**A. Lithium**

**B. Elavil**

**C. Ativan**

**D. Haldol**

The correct choice in this scenario is the medication that is most frequently used to manage severe mood disorders, specifically in the context of extreme despair and agitation. This medication is effective in stabilizing mood and reducing the risk of further episodes of depression or mania, which can be particularly crucial for a client who has just been discharged from hospitalization. When a client presents with signs of extreme despair, there may be concerns about bipolar disorder or severe depressive episodes. Lithium is a mood stabilizer that not only helps in managing manic episodes but also is effective in the treatment of depressive states associated with bipolar disorder. Its role in reducing the frequency and intensity of mood swings makes it a suitable choice for the given symptoms of despair and subsequent agitation. The other medications listed do serve different purposes: - Elavil is primarily an antidepressant used for chronic pain and may not provide the immediate stabilization needed for extreme mood changes. - Ativan is an anti-anxiety medication that can help with agitation but does not address the underlying mood disorder as effectively as lithium. - Haldol is an antipsychotic that treats severe agitation or psychosis but is less appropriate for mood stabilization compared to lithium. By choosing lithium, the clinician aims to provide a comprehensive treatment approach that addresses both current

**2. What classification system evaluates clients using various personal and environmental factors?**

**A. Social role functioning**

**B. Mental and physical health**

**C. Environmental problems**

**D. Psychiatric pathology**

The classification system that evaluates clients using various personal and environmental factors is rooted in a comprehensive understanding of an individual's overall functioning. While psychiatric pathology primarily focuses on mental disorders and diagnoses, it does not encompass the broader range of personal and environmental influences that affect a person's well-being. In contrast, systems that evaluate social role functioning, mental and physical health, and environmental problems tend to consider specific aspects but may not fully integrate the complex interplay of personal characteristics and situational factors which are critical in holistic assessment. Thus, the classification that best aligns with evaluating clients through a lens that includes diverse personal and environmental elements reflects a more nuanced understanding of client needs beyond merely identifying psychiatric conditions. This makes it essential for practitioners to employ a broader framework that looks at how these various factors contribute to a client's overall life scenarios, enhancing the effectiveness of interventions and support.

**3. Which of the following is NOT an appropriate group for genetic counseling?**

- A. Couples with a child having an inherited disorder**
- B. Women with multiple miscarriages**
- C. New mothers who have suffered postpartum depression**
- D. Men aware of a family history of birth defects**

Genetic counseling is a process designed to help individuals and families understand genetic conditions and the implications of genetic disorders. It typically involves the assessment of risk for inherited conditions, offering guidance, and providing support for those at risk. Several groups are commonly referred for genetic counseling due to factors such as family history of genetic disorders, existing health conditions, or reproductive histories. When considering the options, new mothers who have suffered postpartum depression do not generally fall into a category where genetic counseling is mandated. Postpartum depression is primarily a psychological issue rather than a hereditary one, and its causes are multifaceted, including hormonal changes, personal history, and environmental factors. Thus, while these new mothers may require mental health support, they do not typically need genetic counseling, as their situation is not directly related to hereditary conditions. On the other hand, other groups listed, such as couples with a child who has an inherited disorder, women with multiple miscarriages, and men with a family history of birth defects, all have direct connections to genetics that warrant counseling. Couples with a child facing an inherited disorder can benefit from discussions about risks for future children, whereas women with multiple miscarriages may explore underlying genetic causes. Similarly, men aware of a family history of birth defects might seek counseling

**4. When a social worker and client are from different ethnic or racial groups, what should the social worker prioritize?**

- A. Recognize the differences and understand how they may impact on the treatment process**
- B. Engage in supervision and/or consultation with a member of that ethnic or racial group**
- C. Understand the customs and beliefs that are universal to those from that ethnic or racial group**
- D. Ask the client if this is a problem prior to starting treatment**

Prioritizing the recognition of differences between the social worker and the client, and understanding how those differences may impact the treatment process, is essential in social work practice. This approach focuses on cultural competence, which involves being aware of and responsive to the cultural factors that influence a client's experience, identity, and treatment. By acknowledging these differences, the social worker can tailor the therapeutic approach to better meet the client's needs, ensuring that interventions are respectful and relevant to the client's cultural context. This recognition can also foster a trusting relationship, as it shows the client that their unique experiences and cultural background are valued. It is crucial for effective communication and can help address any potential biases or misunderstandings that could arise during treatment. While engaging in supervision or consultation with a member of the ethnic or racial group can be beneficial, it is not the primary focus when starting to work with a diverse client. Similarly, understanding universals or asking clients if cultural differences are a problem may not delve deeply enough into the specific nuances of the client's individual experience. Therefore, recognizing and understanding differences as a foundational step is pivotal in establishing an effective therapeutic alliance.

5. How is the role of a social worker best described when engaged in crisis intervention?
- A. Short-term support focused on restoring clients' psychological capacities
  - B. Long-term support to ensure clients are able to address all aspects of trauma
  - C. Passively involved acting as a resource for any concerns or problems
  - D. Highly involved and focused on meeting the clients' basic needs**

In the context of crisis intervention, the role of a social worker is best described as being highly involved and focused on meeting clients' basic needs. During a crisis, clients often experience overwhelming stress, confusion, and disruption to their everyday functioning. The primary function of the social worker in this situation is to assess the immediate needs of the client, which can include emotional support, safety, and stabilization. By focusing on basic needs such as food, shelter, medical care, and emotional safety, social workers ensure that clients can regain a sense of control and stability in their lives. This practical and proactive approach is essential in crisis intervention, as addressing fundamental needs allows clients to begin the process of recovery and move forward. Additionally, this involvement can help prevent further deterioration of the client's mental health and facilitate access to more long-term support services when necessary. The other options suggest different levels and forms of engagement that do not fully encapsulate the immediacy and focus required in a crisis situation. Short-term support focused solely on psychological capacities does not account for the tangible needs that must be met first. Long-term support may be beneficial afterward but is not appropriate in the immediate context of crisis intervention. Finally, a passive approach does not address the urgency and active involvement necessary to

6. When are social workers permitted to terminate services?
- A. When they wish to pursue social relationships with clients
  - B. When they leave employment settings to pursue other opportunities**
  - C. When they believe clients are making poor choices
  - D. When owed money for services

Social workers are permitted to terminate services when they leave employment settings to pursue other opportunities. This process is guided by ethical standards that require social workers to act in the best interest of their clients. When a social worker transitions out of a workplace, they must ensure that clients are informed and provided appropriate referrals or resources to continue receiving the necessary support. In this circumstance, the social worker's obligation is to prioritize the well-being of the client, ensuring that an adequate transition plan is in place so that the client's needs are met, and they are not abruptly cut off from services. This reflects the ethical commitment to client welfare and continuity of care. The other circumstances presented involve potential conflicts of interest or ethical dilemmas. For instance, pursuing social relationships with clients undermines professional boundaries and can create exploitation risks. Terminating services simply because clients make poor choices disregards the responsibility to support clients through their decision-making processes. Similarly, terminating services over unpaid fees must be approached cautiously and ethically, with consideration for the client's current situation and potential hardships.

**7. Which of the following is NOT an indicator of ego strength?**

- A. Taking responsibility for actions**
- B. Dealing with mood changes**
- C. Accepting limitations and being accountable**
- D. Blaming others**

Ego strength refers to an individual's capacity to maintain a sense of self and manage life's challenges and stresses effectively. It is often characterized by resilience, self-regulation, acceptance of reality, and the ability to take responsibility for one's actions. High ego strength allows individuals to cope with emotional ups and downs, accept their limitations, and hold themselves accountable for their outcomes. Taking responsibility for actions reflects a strong sense of self and accountability, which are key indicators of ego strength. Dealing with mood changes requires emotional regulation and adaptability, both of which signify a healthy ego. Additionally, accepting limitations and being accountable demonstrates a realistic self-appraisal and maturity, further illustrating an individual's ego strength. In contrast, blaming others signifies a lack of self-awareness and responsibility, which undermines rather than supports ego strength. An individual who blames others may struggle to manage their own emotions and realities, reflecting a weaker sense of self and an inability to cope effectively with life's challenges. Thus, stating that one's problems arise from external factors instead of taking personal responsibility indicates a diminished ego strength.

**8. What is the ethical consideration of a social worker who dates a supervisee after their professional relationship ends?**

- A. Unethical due to dual relationship**
- B. Ethical since the supervisee left the agency**
- C. Unethical because the relationship led to marriage**
- D. Ethical given that it only prohibits client interactions**

The ethical consideration surrounding a social worker who dates a supervisee after their professional relationship ends revolves primarily around the concept of dual relationships. Even after the professional relationship has concluded, there is a potential for the social worker to still hold a position of power or influence over the supervisee, which can lead to conflicts of interest and questions about the integrity of the previous supervisory relationship. Dual relationships can create challenges in maintaining appropriate professional boundaries. The ethical guidelines emphasize the importance of avoiding situations where a social worker's professional judgment might be compromised due to personal interests. By entering into a romantic relationship, the social worker risks blurring these boundaries and could potentially exploit the power dynamic that existed during their professional relationship, even after it has officially ended. Engaging in a personal relationship with a former supervisee also raises concerns about the potential impact on the supervisee's future professional opportunities, as well as the social worker's professional reputation. This scenario illustrates the importance of maintaining clear boundaries to protect both parties and ensure ethical practice within the profession. Thus, the dating after the professional relationship concludes remains an ethical concern due to the potential for dual relationships to undermine the integrity and objectivity that are foundational to the work of social workers.



**9. What action should a social worker take when faced with an ethical dilemma involving a former personal relationship?**

- A. Discuss the dilemma with a peer for guidance**
- B. Accept the request only if they are comfortable**
- C. Refer the individual to another professional**
- D. Begin therapy without hesitation**

In an ethical dilemma involving a former personal relationship, referring the individual to another professional is the most appropriate course of action. Social workers are bound by ethical standards that prohibit dual relationships that could impair their professional judgment or create a conflict of interest. In this situation, engaging in therapy with someone with whom there is a past personal relationship could lead to blurred boundaries, potential bias, and compromised objectivity, which are critical to maintaining a professional therapeutic environment. By referring the individual to another qualified professional, the social worker ensures that the client receives appropriate support without the complications that arise from their personal history. This action also upholds the ethical standards set forth by professional organizations, ensuring the welfare of the client and preserving the integrity of the social work profession. While discussing the dilemma with a peer for guidance can provide valuable insight and support, it does not resolve the immediate ethical conflict of providing services to someone with whom there is a personal history. Accepting the request only if comfortable or starting therapy without hesitation could lead to potential ethical violations and detriment to the client's well-being. Thus, the decision to refer the individual is the most ethically sound choice in this scenario.

**10. What follows after an assessment is completed according to the problem-solving process?**

- A. Intervention**
- B. Evaluation**
- C. Planning**
- D. Engagement**

After an assessment is completed in the problem-solving process, the next step is intervention. This phase involves putting into action the strategies and techniques that have been formulated based on the assessment findings. In social work practice, interventions are designed to help clients address the issues identified during the assessment, whether these issues relate to mental health, family dynamics, substance abuse, or other social factors. The intervention phase is crucial as it directly influences the client's ability to achieve their goals and improve their situation. It requires the social worker to implement specific, evidence-based approaches, monitor the client's progress, and make adjustments as needed. The effectiveness of interventions can significantly impact outcomes, making this step pivotal to the overall problem-solving process. Following intervention, the next steps typically include evaluation and planning, where the results of the intervention are assessed and future actions are determined. However, intervention is the immediate subsequent action taken after assessment, making it the correct response.

## 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](mailto: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!**