

Association of Social Work Boards Masters (ASWB MSW) 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

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- 1. What prompts people to act in certain ways?**
 - A. Their ability to process information**
 - B. The failure to perceive new information**
 - C. Anything they perceive from their environments or from within themselves**
 - D. The matching of their awareness with their experiences**

- 2. What is the primary treatment goal of SSRIs?**
 - A. Anxiety Disorders**
 - B. Bipolar Disorder**
 - C. Depression**
 - D. Schizophrenia**

- 3. What is the first stage in the traditional five stages of grief?**
 - A. Anger**
 - B. Bargaining**
 - C. Depression**
 - D. Denial and isolation**

- 4. What does human relations theory (Theory Y) emphasize?**
 - A. Reward and punishment as motivators**
 - B. Cohesive work groups and open communication**
 - C. Hierarchical structure of power**
 - D. Finding the one 'best way' to complete tasks**

- 5. What does rationalization serve as in defense mechanisms?**
 - A. First line of defense**
 - B. Second line of defense**
 - C. Third line of defense**
 - D. Not considered a defense mechanism**

6. What are independent variables known to be in experimental research?

- A. The results or impacts**
- B. The causes or treatments provided**
- C. The methods used for measurement**
- D. The control groups within the study**

7. Expressive language involves:

- A. Understanding what is said to you**
- B. Putting thoughts into words and sentences**
- C. Responding to verbal commands**
- D. Listening and responding in kind**

8. What should a social worker rule out as a cause for enuresis (bed-wetting)?

- A. Communication problems**
- B. Medical reasons**
- C. Intellectual Disability**
- D. Emotional distress**

9. What does 'confrontation' in a therapeutic context involve?

- A. Calling attention to something**
- B. Avoiding the topic**
- C. Aggressive behavior**
- D. Ignoring the problem**

10. Which of the following is NOT included in the DSM-5?

- A. World Health Organization Disability Assessment Schedule (WHODAS)**
- B. Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF)**
- C. Cultural Formulation Interview Guide (CFI)**
- D. ICD-10 Codes**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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- 1. What prompts people to act in certain ways?**
 - A. Their ability to process information**
 - B. The failure to perceive new information**
 - C. Anything they perceive from their environments or from within themselves**
 - D. The matching of their awareness with their experiences**

People's actions can be influenced by various factors, both internal and external. Option A, the ability to process information, is not necessarily a determining factor as people may still act a certain way even if they are able to process information effectively. Option B, the failure to perceive new information, is also incorrect because people may still act in a certain way even if they perceive new information. Option D, the matching of their awareness with their experiences, may be true in some cases, but it does not encompass all possible prompts for people's actions. Option C, anything people perceive from their environments or from within themselves, is the most comprehensive answer as it includes both external and internal factors that can influence people's actions.

- 2. What is the primary treatment goal of SSRIs?**
 - A. Anxiety Disorders**
 - B. Bipolar Disorder**
 - C. Depression**
 - D. Schizophrenia**

SSRIs, or selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, are a type of medication commonly used to treat depression. The primary goal of SSRIs is to increase the levels of serotonin in the brain, which can help alleviate symptoms of depression. While they may also be used to treat anxiety disorders and bipolar disorder, they are not typically the first-line treatment for these conditions. Additionally, SSRIs are not used to treat schizophrenia, which is a completely different type of mental illness. Therefore, the primary treatment goal of SSRIs is to address symptoms of depression specifically.

- 3. What is the first stage in the traditional five stages of grief?**
 - A. Anger**
 - B. Bargaining**
 - C. Depression**
 - D. Denial and isolation**

The first stage in the traditional five stages of grief is denial and isolation. This is because when people first experience loss or tragedy, it is common for them to refuse to accept the reality of the situation and may isolate themselves from others as a coping mechanism. Anger, bargaining, and depression are the subsequent stages that individuals may go through in the grief process, but they do not initially start with these emotions. It is also important to note that these stages are not linear and individuals may not experience all of them in the same order. Therefore, the other options listed are incorrect as they do not reflect the first stage in the five stages of grief.

4. What does human relations theory (Theory Y) emphasize?

- A. Reward and punishment as motivators
- B. Cohesive work groups and open communication**
- C. Hierarchical structure of power
- D. Finding the one 'best way' to complete tasks

The human relations theory, also known as Theory Y, emphasizes the importance of cohesive work groups and open communication. This theory views employees as self-motivated and responsible, and believes that a supportive and positive work environment can lead to increased productivity and job satisfaction. Option A is incorrect because it focuses on extrinsic motivators like rewards and punishments, while Theory Y focuses on intrinsic motivation. Option C is incorrect because it goes against the idea of a supportive work environment and instead highlights a hierarchical power structure. Option D is incorrect because Theory Y believes in flexibility and adapting to each individual's strengths and needs, rather than finding one rigid way to complete tasks.

5. What does rationalization serve as in defense mechanisms?

- A. First line of defense
- B. Second line of defense
- C. Third line of defense**
- D. Not considered a defense mechanism

Rationalization serves as the third line of defense in defense mechanisms. This means that it is not the immediate response to a threat or stressor, but rather typically occurs after other defense mechanisms have already been employed. It is also not considered the final line of defense, as there may still be other defense mechanisms that an individual may turn to if rationalization does not effectively address the threat or stressor. This is why options A and B are incorrect. Option D is incorrect as well, as rationalization is indeed considered a defense mechanism.

6. What are independent variables known to be in experimental research?

- A. The results or impacts
- B. The causes or treatments provided**
- C. The methods used for measurement
- D. The control groups within the study

Independent variables are known to be the causes or treatments provided in experimental research. This means they are the factors that are purposely changed or manipulated by the researchers to see how they affect the outcome of the experiment. The control group, option D, is not an independent variable, as it is used for comparison and is not manipulated. Option A, the results or impacts, are dependent variables that are affected by the independent variable. Option C, the methods used for measurement, are not independent variables but rather the tools used to collect data on the dependent variable.

7. Expressive language involves:

- A. Understanding what is said to you**
- B. Putting thoughts into words and sentences**
- C. Responding to verbal commands**
- D. Listening and responding in kind**

Expressive language involves the ability to put one's thoughts into words and sentences. This means that the individual is able to verbally express themselves and communicate effectively. Option A, understanding what is said to you, involves receptive language rather than expressive language. Option C, responding to verbal commands, only demonstrates the ability to follow directions and does not necessarily require the use of language. Option D, listening and responding in kind, is a combination of both expressive and receptive language skills, but does not solely focus on the ability to produce words and sentences.

8. What should a social worker rule out as a cause for enuresis (bed-wetting)?

- A. Communication problems**
- B. Medical reasons**
- C. Intellectual Disability**
- D. Emotional distress**

It is important for a social worker to rule out medical reasons as a cause for enuresis (bed-wetting) because it could be a symptom of an underlying physical condition. Communication problems, intellectual disability, and emotional distress are all potential causes that should also be considered, but they are less likely than medical reasons. A thorough assessment should be conducted to determine the root cause of the enuresis.

9. What does 'confrontation' in a therapeutic context involve?

- A. Calling attention to something**
- B. Avoiding the topic**
- C. Aggressive behavior**
- D. Ignoring the problem**

Confrontation in a therapeutic context involves directly addressing and acknowledging a problem or issue. This may involve bringing up a difficult topic, speaking honestly about feelings or concerns, and actively working to find resolution or understanding. Choosing to avoid the topic (Option B), display aggressive behavior (Option C), or ignore the problem (Option D) may hinder progress in therapy and prevent individuals from addressing and overcoming their challenges. Therefore, option A is the most appropriate response in the context of therapy.

10. Which of the following is NOT included in the DSM-5?

- A. World Health Organization Disability Assessment Schedule (WHODAS)**
- B. Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF)**
- C. Cultural Formulation Interview Guide (CFI)**
- D. ICD-10 Codes**

The Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) was included in previous versions of the DSM, but was removed from the DSM-5. It was deemed too vague and subjective and was replaced with a more specific and reliable assessment tool called the World Health Organization Disability Assessment Schedule (WHODAS). Both the Cultural Formulation Interview Guide (CFI) and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) codes are included in the DSM-5.

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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://aswbmswpractice.examzify.com>

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

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