

BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK (BSW) PRACTICE EXAM (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED 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. 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. Which principle best supports respecting a client's autonomy in decision-making?**
 - A. Beneficence
 - B. Nonmaleficence
 - C. Self-Determination
 - D. Justice

- 2. In PRWORA, which element was not one of the restructuring changes to TANF?**
 - A. Lifetime limit on the number of years that benefits could be paid out of federal funds was imposed
 - B. Strict work requirements to qualify for federal aid were mandated
 - C. States could set their own benefit levels
 - D. Block grant to the states replacing a matching grant removed much of federal regulatory authority over TANF

- 3. What is the most important benefit of group work?**
 - A. It is a cost-effective method of helping clients, allowing more individuals to be served
 - B. It effectively addresses problems through mutual aid of peers who serve as the primary helping agent
 - C. It can be used to treat diverse issues and problems, allowing wide applicability in practice
 - D. It can be used in conjunction with individual therapy as an ancillary modality

- 4. In group therapy, what is the primary mechanism by which groups effect change?**
 - A. Mutual aid from peers as primary agents
 - B. Cost savings
 - C. Standardized treatment protocols
 - D. Individual therapist's sole guidance

- 5. A client who is receiving case management and is nearing termination learns that her father has been hospitalized. What should the social worker do?**
- A. Develop new goals for the client aimed at providing support related to this family crisis
 - B. Make a referral to the hospital social worker
 - C. Assess whether termination is still appropriate at this time given this change in the client's life
 - D. Terminate with the client because this is a different issue that may or may not require services
- 6. When helping a supervisee develop empathic communication with clients, which supervisory approach is MOST effective?**
- A. Engaging in role-playing with the supervisee to provide feedback on verbal and nonverbal communication skills used
 - B. Explaining to the supervisee why clients need social work services
 - C. Helping the supervisee understand how service delivery is perceived from clients' perspectives
 - D. Suggesting the supervisee keep a journal to record feelings that interfere with therapeutic alliances when working with clients
- 7. Which of the following is NOT typically described as a physical neurological symptom?**
- A. Confusion or Delirium
 - B. Visual or Auditory Changes
 - C. Pain or Weakness
 - D. Involuntary Movements
- 8. Which activity is an example of macro practice in social work?**
- A. Individual counseling
 - B. Case management
 - C. Policy advocacy and community organizing
 - D. Direct service to a single client

9. Which action is most critical when using an empowerment approach with a client?

- A. Helping a client learn skills that can be used to solve future problems
- B. Listening to a client who is expressing a high degree of emotion
- C. Referring a client to a needed resource or service
- D. Providing direction when a client is struggling with alternatives

10. Which term best describes a family pattern with weak boundaries and over-dependence on family members for identity?

- A. Disengagement
- B. Rigidity
- C. Enmeshment
- D. Cohesion

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Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Which principle best supports respecting a client's autonomy in decision-making?

- A. Beneficence
- B. Nonmaleficence
- C. Self-Determination**
- D. Justice

Self-determination centers the client's control over decisions and life choices. In practice, it means honoring the client's right to decide what happens to them, the options they pursue, and the path their care will take, as long as they have the capacity to decide and are making an informed, voluntary choice. A social worker supports this by presenting information clearly, outlining risks and benefits, and helping the client weigh options without pressuring them. It also involves assessing understanding, ensuring consent is voluntary, and respecting refusals or alternative requests. Beneficence and nonmaleficence guide what we aim to achieve and avoid, but they describe the goals of care rather than who gets to decide. Justice emphasizes fairness and equitable treatment, which is important for access and rights, yet autonomy specifically protects the client's authority over personal decisions.

2. In PRWORA, which element was not one of the restructuring changes to TANF?

- A. Lifetime limit on the number of years that benefits could be paid out of federal funds was imposed
- B. Strict work requirements to qualify for federal aid were mandated
- C. States could set their own benefit levels**
- D. Block grant to the states replacing a matching grant removed much of federal regulatory authority over TANF

The main idea being tested is how PRWORA changed the welfare system by reshaping TANF. The reform focused on three key shifts: imposing a lifetime limit on benefits, strengthening work requirements for eligibility, and moving from matching funds to a block grant to the states, which reduced federal regulatory authority over TANF. The statement that states could set their own benefit levels reflects a feature of TANF's design—the greater state discretion in administering benefits within the block grant framework. However, the significant structural reforms that define the change to TANF are the lifetime limit, the mandatory work requirements, and the creation of the block grant that altered funding and federal oversight. Those are the elements most central to the restructuring, while benefit levels are part of how states manage the program within the new framework rather than a primary restructuring change.

3. What is the most important benefit of group work?

- A. It is a cost-effective method of helping clients, allowing more individuals to be served
- B. It effectively addresses problems through mutual aid of peers who serve as the primary helping agent**
- C. It can be used to treat diverse issues and problems, allowing wide applicability in practice
- D. It can be used in conjunction with individual therapy as an ancillary modality

Group work changes clients most through the support and guidance that come from peers themselves. When members act as the primary helping agents, they learn from one another's experiences, share effective coping strategies, give and receive feedback, and normalize difficulties within a relatable social context. This mutual aid creates hope, reduces isolation, and fosters practical skill-building in a way that a single clinician may not achieve alone. The facilitator shapes the process and maintains a safe, focused environment, but the real engine of change is the interpersonal learning and support that peers provide to each other. Other benefits—being cost-effective, applicable to a wide range of issues, or fitting well with individual therapy—are real advantages, but they are secondary to the core mechanism of change: peers serving as the primary source of help through mutual aid.

4. In group therapy, what is the primary mechanism by which groups effect change?

- A. Mutual aid from peers as primary agents**
- B. Cost savings
- C. Standardized treatment protocols
- D. Individual therapist's sole guidance

Change in group therapy mainly comes from mutual aid among group members, with peers serving as the primary agents of change. As people share experiences, provide feedback, model coping strategies, and offer support, participants feel less alone, gain new perspectives, and are more willing to try different behaviors in a safe, real-social context. This peer interaction creates accountability and opportunities to practice skills, which drives progress. The therapist's role is to facilitate, structure, and ensure safety, but the engine of change is the ongoing interpersonal learning that occurs among group members. Practical benefits like cost savings can accompany therapy, but they don't explain how change happens. Likewise, standardized protocols provide structure without being the main mechanism, and relying on the therapist's sole guidance isn't how group dynamics produce growth, since the learning emerges from the collective experience and feedback of the group.

5. A client who is receiving case management and is nearing termination learns that her father has been hospitalized. What should the social worker do?

- A. Develop new goals for the client aimed at providing support related to this family crisis
- B. Make a referral to the hospital social worker
- C. Assess whether termination is still appropriate at this time given this change in the client's life**
- D. Terminate with the client because this is a different issue that may or may not require services

When a client is nearing termination, a new life event or crisis requires re-evaluating whether ending services is still appropriate. A family hospitalization can alter the client's stress level, coping resources, and support needs, so the social worker should assess how these changes affect ongoing risk, functioning, and the client's ability to maintain progress after discharge. This involves reviewing current progress, available informal supports, safety and stability, and whether there is a plan to sustain gains without ongoing case management, or whether a temporary extension, adjustment of goals, or referral to other resources is warranted. The goal is to ensure continuity of care and to avoid ending supports prematurely just because a crisis has emerged. In short, pause to determine if termination still serves the client's best interest in light of the new situation before making a final decision.

6. When helping a supervisee develop empathic communication with clients, which supervisory approach is MOST effective?

- A. Engaging in role-playing with the supervisee to provide feedback on verbal and nonverbal communication skills used**
- B. Explaining to the supervisee why clients need social work services
- C. Helping the supervisee understand how service delivery is perceived from clients' perspectives
- D. Suggesting the supervisee keep a journal to record feelings that interfere with therapeutic alliances when working with clients

Focusing on practicing empathic interaction through guided rehearsal is the most effective way to develop empathic communication. Role-playing lets the supervisee rehearse how to listen attentively, reflect feelings, validate clients, and respond with an appropriate tone, pace, and nonverbal cues. When the supervisor provides immediate, concrete feedback on both what is said and how it's said—verbal warmth, eye contact, body posture, and vocal intonation—the trainee can saw off rough edges and refine behaviors that convey understanding and care. This experiential practice translates empathic understanding into observable skills that clients can actually feel and respond to, which is what makes empathy come alive in sessions. Other approaches have value, but they target understanding rather than skillful demonstration. Explaining why services are needed or considering how clients view service delivery emphasizes cognitive insight about clients' perspectives, not the on-the-spot relational skills of empathic engagement. Journaling about personal feelings helps with self-awareness and affect regulation, but it doesn't provide real-time opportunities to practice and receive feedback on empathic behaviors in interaction with clients.

7. Which of the following is NOT typically described as a physical neurological symptom?

- A. Confusion or Delirium**
- B. Visual or Auditory Changes
- C. Pain or Weakness
- D. Involuntary Movements

The concept here is differentiating physical neurological signs from cognitive or mental-status changes. Physical neurological symptoms are those that reflect observable issues with the nervous system's motor or sensory functions—things you can see in movement, sensation, reflexes, or coordination. Confusion or delirium is a cognitive disturbance, affecting attention, awareness, and thinking. It signals brain function disruption, but it isn't a direct motor or sensory sign you would observe as a physical neurologic symptom. That's why it's not typically described as a physical neurological symptom. The other options describe physical neurological manifestations: visual or auditory changes are sensory disturbances tied to the nervous system; pain or weakness reflect motor or sensory pathway involvement; involuntary movements are observable motor phenomena caused by neural circuitry.

8. Which activity is an example of macro practice in social work?

- A. Individual counseling
- B. Case management
- C. Policy advocacy and community organizing**
- D. Direct service to a single client

Macro practice focuses on changing systems, policies, and how communities operate—the kinds of work that affect large groups and structural conditions rather than just one person. Policy advocacy and community organizing embodies this because it aims to influence laws, resource allocation, and collective action to improve well-being at a community or population level. In contrast, working with an individual client through counseling concentrates on personal issues and needs, which is micro practice. Case management coordinates services for clients within existing systems to meet specific needs, often at the client or small-group level, so it's typically seen as mezzo or micro rather than macro.

9. Which action is most critical when using an empowerment approach with a client?

- A. Helping a client learn skills that can be used to solve future problems**
- B. Listening to a client who is expressing a high degree of emotion
- C. Referring a client to a needed resource or service
- D. Providing direction when a client is struggling with alternatives

Empowerment in social work is about building the client's own capacity to handle challenges and take control of their future. The action that best fits this approach is helping the client learn skills they can apply to solve problems later on. When clients gain practical problem-solving abilities, they become more autonomous, confident in their decisions, and less dependent on professionals for every step. Skills such as identifying problems, generating options, weighing consequences, and planning action give them tools they can reuse across different situations. Listening and emotional support are important for building trust and understanding the client's perspective, and referring to needed resources helps connect them to services, but neither directly expands the client's ability to act on their own in the future. Providing direction can be helpful in certain moments, but it can undermine agency by placing the expert in control rather than focusing on the client's developing competence.

10. Which term best describes a family pattern with weak boundaries and over-dependence on family members for identity?

A. Disengagement

B. Rigidity

C. Enmeshment

D. Cohesion

Enmeshment describes a family pattern where boundaries are weak and members are overly involved in each other's lives, relying on the family for a sense of identity. In enmeshed families, individuality is blurred, personal autonomy is limited, and self-worth becomes tied to meeting family expectations. This explains why the scenario fits enmeshment: identity and functioning depend on the family unit rather than on separate, independent sense of self. By contrast, disengagement involves too little involvement and rigid boundaries, rigidity refers to inflexible roles and rules, and cohesion refers to emotional bonding that can be healthy or unhealthy but does not inherently imply weak boundaries or identity dependence.

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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://bsw170.examzify.com>

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

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