

NASW CODE OF ETHICS 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. What is the primary goal of social workers according to the ethical principle for service?**
 - A. To gain recognition
 - B. To address social problems and help those in need
 - C. To ensure personal profit
 - D. To establish controls on clients

- 2. What responsibility do social workers have regarding public participation?**
 - A. Facilitating limited public input on policies
 - B. Discouraging public engagement in social policies
 - C. Facilitating informed participation in shaping social policies
 - D. Only allowing select experts to shape policy

- 3. Which of the following is a key element of social workers' ethical responsibilities?**
 - A. Avoiding all forms of public engagement.
 - B. Upholding confidential client information.
 - C. Claiming credit for work done by colleagues.
 - D. Engaging in practices that could mislead clients.

- 4. In advocating for diverse populations, social workers should prioritize which of the following?**
 - A. Advocating for economic benefits only
 - B. Promoting cultural competence in policies and practices
 - C. Focusing on a single cultural viewpoint
 - D. Discouraging societal awareness of diversity

- 5. What must social workers demonstrate if they engage in sexual contact with former clients?**
 - A. There was no exploitation or coercion
 - B. That they were acting in the client's best interest
 - C. That the former client consented
 - D. That both parties have moved on from the relationship

- 6. Which value emphasizes that social workers must behave in a trustworthy manner?**
- A. Ethical principle of social justice
 - B. Ethical principle of integrity
 - C. Ethical principle of self-determination
 - D. Ethical principle of confidentiality
- 7. Why is it important for social workers to avoid dual relationships with supervisees?**
- A. To prevent potential harm or exploitation
 - B. To create closer relationships
 - C. To ensure no feedback is given
 - D. To simplify the supervisory process
- 8. In advocating for social justice, social workers are expected to:**
- A. Act independently without regard for social context
 - B. Advocate for the rights of all, particularly the marginalized
 - C. Only promote initiatives that benefit themselves
 - D. Emphasize economic outcomes over social equity
- 9. What ethical principle aligns with the value of social justice?**
- A. Social workers challenge established norms
 - B. Social workers seek to maintain the status quo
 - C. Social workers pursue social change for the privileged
 - D. Social workers challenge social injustice
- 10. Which of the following statements is true regarding social workers and clients' relatives?**
- A. They can engage in sexual contact if both parties agree
 - B. They should avoid sexual activities due to potential risk of exploitation
 - C. They must inform the client before engaging with relatives
 - D. They can engage in casual relationships after termination of services

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. What is the primary goal of social workers according to the ethical principle for service?

- A. To gain recognition
- B. To address social problems and help those in need**
- C. To ensure personal profit
- D. To establish controls on clients

The primary goal of social workers, as outlined by the ethical principle for service, is to address social problems and help those in need. This reflects the foundational mission of social work, which is rooted in serving individuals, families, and communities to promote well-being and social justice. Social workers are dedicated to enhancing people's capacity to meet their own needs and improving social conditions. By prioritizing the needs of clients, social workers strive to empower individuals and groups, advocate for social change, and work towards making systems more equitable and just. This principle emphasizes the importance of ethics in social work practice, ensuring that the focus remains on client welfare and the betterment of society at large. Other options, such as gaining recognition, ensuring personal profit, or establishing controls on clients, do not align with the ethical obligations of social workers, as these would contradict the fundamental principles of service and the commitment to advocate for the vulnerable and marginalized.

2. What responsibility do social workers have regarding public participation?

- A. Facilitating limited public input on policies
- B. Discouraging public engagement in social policies
- C. Facilitating informed participation in shaping social policies**
- D. Only allowing select experts to shape policy

Social workers have a critical responsibility to facilitate informed participation in shaping social policies. This principle aligns with the values of the NASW Code of Ethics, which emphasizes social justice and the importance of community involvement in decision-making processes that affect individuals and groups. By ensuring that the public is informed and engaged, social workers help empower communities, advocate for their needs, and promote more equitable policies. Facilitating informed participation means providing individuals and communities with the necessary knowledge, tools, and opportunities to express their opinions and influence policies that affect their lives. This engagement allows diverse voices to be heard, ensures that various perspectives are considered, and reflects a democratic approach to policymaking. In contrast, options that suggest limited public input or discouragement of engagement undermine the principle of social justice and the role of social workers as advocates for community involvement. Allowing only select experts to shape policy fails to recognize the valuable insights and experiences of individuals directly impacted by those policies. Thus, promoting informed public participation is essential for effective and responsive social work practice.

3. Which of the following is a key element of social workers' ethical responsibilities?

- A. Avoiding all forms of public engagement.
- B. Upholding confidential client information.**
- C. Claiming credit for work done by colleagues.
- D. Engaging in practices that could mislead clients.

Upholding confidential client information is a fundamental ethical responsibility of social workers as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics. Confidentiality is crucial in establishing trust between the social worker and the client. Clients need to feel secure that their personal information will not be disclosed without their consent, except in circumstances where there are legal or ethical obligations to report, such as risks of harm to the client or others. Protecting client privacy not only fosters a safe environment for open dialogue but also ensures compliance with legal and ethical standards. Maintaining confidentiality is also essential for encouraging clients to seek help and discuss sensitive issues without fear of judgment or consequences. By upholding this principle, social workers demonstrate respect for the client's autonomy and dignity, thereby enabling more effective service delivery and outcomes. This commitment to confidentiality is a cornerstone of professional practice in social work.

4. In advocating for diverse populations, social workers should prioritize which of the following?

- A. Advocating for economic benefits only
- B. Promoting cultural competence in policies and practices**
- C. Focusing on a single cultural viewpoint
- D. Discouraging societal awareness of diversity

Promoting cultural competence in policies and practices is essential for social workers advocating for diverse populations. Cultural competence involves understanding and integrating the values, beliefs, and practices of different cultural groups into social work interventions and policies. This approach acknowledges that individuals from diverse backgrounds may experience oppression, marginalization, or unique challenges that differ significantly from the mainstream narrative. By prioritizing cultural competence, social workers can better meet the needs of the populations they serve, ensuring that interventions are not only effective but also respectful and relevant to the individuals' cultural contexts. This fosters collaboration and trust between social workers and clients, ultimately leading to more equitable and inclusive outcomes. The other options do not align with the core principles of advocacy for diverse populations. Economic benefits alone do not address the broader systemic issues that marginalized groups face. Focusing on a single cultural viewpoint undermines the diversity that social work aims to support, while discouraging societal awareness of diversity contradicts the fundamental goal of advocating for social justice and equality. Thus, promoting cultural competence is the most comprehensive and relevant approach in this context.

5. What must social workers demonstrate if they engage in sexual contact with former clients?

- A. There was no exploitation or coercion**
- B. That they were acting in the client's best interest
- C. That the former client consented
- D. That both parties have moved on from the relationship

The requirement for social workers who engage in sexual contact with former clients to demonstrate that there was no exploitation or coercion is rooted in the ethical obligation to uphold the integrity of the professional relationship. Social workers are expected to maintain clear boundaries that ensure the well-being of their clients. The dynamic between a client and a social worker is inherently one of power imbalance, where the social worker holds a position of authority and influence over the client. Thus, it is critical for social workers to show that the former client was not subjected to any form of exploitation or coercion, as this helps ensure that the decision to engage in a sexual relationship was genuinely free from undue influence. This principle reinforces the ethical standard that promotes respect for the client's autonomy and acknowledges the trust placed in the social worker by the client. By focusing on the absence of exploitation or coercion, social workers can demonstrate their commitment to ethical practice and the protection of vulnerable populations. Other options may address aspects of the relationship, such as consent or moving on from the relationship, but they do not sufficiently capture the core ethical concern of exploitation and coercion that is essential in the context of professional boundaries and client safety.

6. Which value emphasizes that social workers must behave in a trustworthy manner?

- A. Ethical principle of social justice
- B. Ethical principle of integrity**
- C. Ethical principle of self-determination
- D. Ethical principle of confidentiality

The value that emphasizes social workers must behave in a trustworthy manner is the ethical principle of integrity. This principle underscores the importance of honesty and reliability in the professional conduct of social workers. Maintaining integrity means that social workers should adhere to moral and ethical principles, including being truthful in their communications, honoring commitments, and acting consistently with their professional values. Trustworthiness is critical in building rapport with clients and ensuring that they feel safe and supported in disclosing sensitive information. By embodying integrity, social workers demonstrate their commitment to upholding the dignity and worth of individuals, which is foundational to effective practice in the field. While the ethical principles of social justice, self-determination, and confidentiality are also essential to social work, they do not specifically focus on the aspect of trustworthiness in behavior. Social justice emphasizes fairness and advocating for equal access to resources, self-determination relates to honoring clients' rights to make their own choices, and confidentiality involves safeguarding private information. All these principles are important, but integrity specifically pertains to the way social workers conduct themselves in a trustworthy manner.

7. Why is it important for social workers to avoid dual relationships with supervisees?

A. To prevent potential harm or exploitation

B. To create closer relationships

C. To ensure no feedback is given

D. To simplify the supervisory process

Avoiding dual relationships with supervisees is crucial primarily to prevent potential harm or exploitation. Social workers have a responsibility to maintain professional boundaries, which helps ensure that the supervisory relationship remains focused on the supervisee's learning and development without any conflicts of interest. Dual relationships can compromise the objectivity of the supervisor, leading to favoritism or biased evaluations that can ultimately harm the professional growth of the supervisee. Maintaining clear professional boundaries helps to protect the integrity of the supervision process and promotes an environment where supervisees feel safe to discuss their challenges and seek guidance. This is essential in fostering a healthy, professional, and ethical workplace culture. In avoiding dual relationships, social workers uphold the ethical principles of competence, integrity, and respect for the welfare of others, thereby reinforcing the trust that is foundational to the profession.

8. In advocating for social justice, social workers are expected to:

A. Act independently without regard for social context

B. Advocate for the rights of all, particularly the marginalized

C. Only promote initiatives that benefit themselves

D. Emphasize economic outcomes over social equity

In the context of social work and the NASW Code of Ethics, advocating for social justice fundamentally involves supporting the rights and well-being of all individuals, with particular attention directed toward those who are marginalized or vulnerable in society. This focus is essential because social workers are tasked with addressing inequalities and injustices that disproportionately affect certain groups, such as people of color, low-income individuals, and others who face systemic barriers. When social workers advocate for the rights of marginalized populations, they align their practices with the fundamental values of the profession, which prioritize service to others and social change. This advocacy goes beyond mere acknowledgment; it involves actively challenging discriminatory practices and policies that perpetuate inequality. By prioritizing the rights of those who have historically been oppressed or overlooked, social workers contribute to creating a more just society. The other options do not align with the ethical obligations of social workers. Acting independently without regard for social context fails to recognize the complexities of social issues and the interconnectedness of community dynamics. Promoting initiatives that only benefit oneself undermines the core values of service and social responsibility, while emphasizing economic outcomes over social equity contrasts with the commitment to prioritize human rights and social justice as foundational elements of social work practice.

9. What ethical principle aligns with the value of social justice?

- A. Social workers challenge established norms
- B. Social workers seek to maintain the status quo
- C. Social workers pursue social change for the privileged
- D. Social workers challenge social injustice**

The alignment of the ethical principle with the value of social justice is rooted in the commitment social workers have to addressing and combating social injustices. By challenging social injustice, social workers advocate for marginalized and oppressed groups. This principle embodies the responsibility to strive for equitable treatment and support systemic change that addresses inequalities within society. In doing so, social workers actively work against discrimination and social barriers that prevent individuals from accessing opportunities and resources. This involves not only direct advocacy for individuals but also broader initiatives aimed at reforming policies and practices that contribute to social inequities. By focusing on challenging social injustices, social workers are embodying the essence of social justice, which seeks to create a more equitable society for all. The other options do not reflect this deep commitment to social justice. Maintaining the status quo generally implies a lack of challenge to existing inequities. Seeking social change only for privileged groups would undermine the fundamental goal of addressing injustice for all. Similarly, challenging established norms without a direct focus on social injustice may not lead to meaningful changes that promote equity and justice for marginalized communities.

10. Which of the following statements is true regarding social workers and clients' relatives?

- A. They can engage in sexual contact if both parties agree
- B. They should avoid sexual activities due to potential risk of exploitation**
- C. They must inform the client before engaging with relatives
- D. They can engage in casual relationships after termination of services

The statement that social workers should avoid sexual activities with clients' relatives due to potential risk of exploitation is aligned with the ethical guidelines set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics. It is vital for social workers to maintain professional boundaries to ensure the integrity of the therapeutic relationship and to prevent any exploitation or harm that may arise from dual relationships. Engaging in sexual relationships with clients or their relatives can create conflicts of interest and might compromise the professional judgment of the social worker. The power dynamics inherent in these relationships can lead to situations where clients' relatives may feel pressured or unable to freely consent. By adhering to the guideline of avoiding sexual activities in this context, social workers prioritize the welfare of their clients and uphold the ethical standards of the profession. The other statements imply scenarios that could contravene ethical practices. Allowing sexual contact with both parties' consent overlooks the potential for exploitation inherent in such cases. Informing a client before engaging with relatives does not address the ethical implications of crossing professional boundaries, and engaging in casual relationships after termination of services remains problematic, as it can still affect the professional's objectivity and the client's well-being.

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://naswcodeofethics.examzify.com>

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

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