

# School Social Work Content Exam 184 Practice (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. Which stage of the group process strengthens the relationships of the members?**
  - A. Forming**
  - B. Middle**
  - C. Storming**
  - D. Performing**
  
- 2. The genogram is primarily used to identify what?**
  - A. Family patterns across generations**
  - B. Academic strengths**
  - C. Medical history only**
  - D. Classroom behavior**
  
- 3. Type 1 traumas are described as what?**
  - A. Acute or 'single-blow' traumatic stressors**
  - B. Chronic or prolonged stressors**
  - C. Vicarious traumas**
  - D. Physical injuries**
  
- 4. Which statement best captures a core principle of cultural competence for school social workers?**
  - A. Acknowledge differences and focus on strengths**
  - B. Assume you fully understand the client's culture**
  - C. Ignore client culture**
  - D. Rely on stereotypes**
  
- 5. Jose is a 6 year old whose parents have consistently used threats of abandonment to control his behavior. His parents' inconsistent care and frequent neglect have caused Jose to expect rejection from his parents. Jose's fear of attachment and expectation of rejection is best described as...**
  - A. Anxious resistant attachment**
  - B. Anxious avoidant attachment**
  - C. Insecure attachment**
  - D. None of the above**

- 6. For an initial screening for ADHD, what is the most appropriate step for a school social worker to take?**
- A. Have the student complete a written assessment.**
  - B. Call the student's parents to interview them about behavior at home.**
  - C. Ask the student's teacher to complete an observational assessment during instruction.**
  - D. Visit the student's classroom and personally conduct an observational assessment of the student's behavior.**
- 7. When explaining the circumstances of a tragic event to a child who is at the pre-operational stage in Piaget's stage theory of cognitive development, a school social worker should keep in mind that ...**
- A. The child cannot think abstractly, and needs a clear, concrete explanation of the circumstances**
  - B. The child has completed all stages of cognitive development, and it would be appropriate and effective to use metaphors to explain the situation**
  - C. The child has probably not acquired any language skills yet**
  - D. It may be helpful to ask the child to write a poem or story to express his or her feelings about the tragedy**
- 8. Which statement about professional competence and development for school social workers is NOT true?**
- A. Social workers should branch out into new practice areas if they attain appropriate training and supervision**
  - B. Social workers should avoid straying beyond their areas of expertise, even if a patient requires services in which they are not well-versed**
  - C. School social workers should approach emerging areas of practice with caution if recognized standards for those areas do not yet exist**
  - D. Social workers should not represent themselves to clients as being competent in areas in which they are not**

- 9. The organization known as Stand for the Silent was founded by Ty Smalley's family.**
- A. Stand for the Silent**
  - B. Be the Change**
  - C. Bullying Stops Here**
  - D. Hope for Tomorrow**
- 10. Which statement correctly identifies the two spheres of supervision in school social work?**
- A. Administrative supervision and Collegial supervision**
  - B. Administrative supervision and Educational supervision**
  - C. Collegial supervision and Educational supervision**
  - D. Administrative supervision only**

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## Answers

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. Which stage of the group process strengthens the relationships of the members?**

- A. Forming**
- B. Middle**
- C. Storming**
- D. Performing**

In the middle stage of group development, relationships strengthen as the team moves beyond initial introductions and starts to settle into how they will work together. This phase, where norms are established, roles become clearer, and trust grows, creates a collaborative climate. Members begin to rely on one another, share responsibilities, and communicate more openly, which deepens bonds and cohesion. When a group is just forming, interactions are tentative and surface-level. During the storming phase, conflicts and power struggles can strain relationships. By the time the group reaches the performing phase, the team is functioning well with established rapport, but the active strengthening of interpersonal ties typically happens in that middle, norming stage.

**2. The genogram is primarily used to identify what?**

- A. Family patterns across generations**
- B. Academic strengths**
- C. Medical history only**
- D. Classroom behavior**

A genogram is a visual map of a family's relationships and health patterns across generations. It helps you see how family dynamics, medical histories, and recurring issues shape a student's current situation. By showing who is related to whom, who lived together, marriages/divorces, and patterns like illnesses or behavioral concerns, it reveals intergenerational patterns that can influence present functioning. Academic strengths and classroom behavior are individual indicators and don't capture those family-wide patterns across generations, while medical history is only one piece of the bigger family history. So the genogram's main use is to identify family patterns across generations.

**3. Type 1 traumas are described as what?**

- A. Acute or 'single-blow' traumatic stressors**
- B. Chronic or prolonged stressors**
- C. Vicarious traumas**
- D. Physical injuries**

Type 1 traumas refer to acute, single-episode traumatic stressors—events that occur suddenly, are external to the person, and have a short duration. This captures why the description “acute or single-blow traumatic stressors” is the best fit: the defining feature is a one-time or brief incident that disrupts functioning. In contrast, chronic or prolonged stressors describe ongoing exposure over time, which is characteristic of Type 2 traumas. Vicarious traumas refer to the impact of exposure to others' trauma (secondary exposure), not the nature of the traumatic event itself, and physical injuries describe a possible outcome rather than how the trauma is classified.

**4. Which statement best captures a core principle of cultural competence for school social workers?**

- A. Acknowledge differences and focus on strengths**
- B. Assume you fully understand the client's culture**
- C. Ignore client culture**
- D. Rely on stereotypes**

Acknowledging differences and focusing on strengths captures the essence of culturally competent school social work. When you recognize that each student's background brings unique insights and you emphasize their strengths, you validate their experiences, build trust with families, and tailor interventions to fit cultural values and community resources. This approach also involves ongoing self-reflection and humility, rather than assuming you fully understand another culture. Statements that imply complete understanding, ignore culture, or rely on stereotypes undermine trust and effectiveness, leading to less relevant supports and poorer outcomes.

**5. Jose is a 6 year old whose parents have consistently used threats of abandonment to control his behavior. His parents' inconsistent care and frequent neglect have caused Jose to expect rejection from his parents. Jose's fear of attachment and expectation of rejection is best described as...**

- A. Anxious resistant attachment**
- B. Anxious avoidant attachment**
- C. Insecure attachment**
- D. None of the above**

When caregiving is inconsistent and neglectful, a child learns that closeness may not be reliable or safe, so they protect themselves by pulling away. This pattern is anxious-avoidant attachment. The key feature here is the avoidance of seeking comfort or closeness with the caregiver, along with a general expectation that the caregiver will not meet their needs or may reject them. In Jose's case, threats of abandonment and ongoing neglect teach him to keep his emotional distance as a way to cope, rather than cling or protest, which aligns with anxious-avoidant attachment. This differs from anxious-resistant attachment, where a child would be clingy and highly distressed about separation and would alternate between seeking and resisting comfort. And while the term insecure attachment covers a broad range of problems, the specific pattern described—emotional withdrawal and expectation of rejection due to unreliability—best fits anxious-avoidant attachment.

6. For an initial screening for ADHD, what is the most appropriate step for a school social worker to take?
- A. Have the student complete a written assessment.
  - B. Call the student's parents to interview them about behavior at home.
  - C. Ask the student's teacher to complete an observational assessment during instruction.
  - D. Visit the student's classroom and personally conduct an observational assessment of the student's behavior.**

Direct, in-context observation of the student during typical classroom instruction is the most informative first step when screening for ADHD in a school setting. Watching how the student behaves in real time during labeled tasks, transitions, and group work provides objective data on attention, distractibility, activity level, and impulse control within the actual demands of school work. This in-class vantage point helps distinguish patterns that are truly characteristic of ADHD from behaviors that might arise from temporary frustration, boredom, or environmental factors, and it sets a solid foundation for what data to collect next. Written assessments and informant interviews are valuable pieces of the overall assessment, but they capture perceptions or reports from limited moments or contexts. A teacher's completed observations are helpful, yet they reflect only one setting and a finite window of time. Home interviews add context but don't reflect school functioning where ADHD symptoms often have their greatest impact on learning. Beginning with direct classroom observation ensures the screening is grounded in the student's school performance, guiding subsequent steps in a comprehensive, multi-method evaluation.

**7. When explaining the circumstances of a tragic event to a child who is at the pre-operational stage in Piaget's stage theory of cognitive development, a school social worker should keep in mind that ...**

**A. The child cannot think abstractly, and needs a clear, concrete explanation of the circumstances**

**B. The child has completed all stages of cognitive development, and it would be appropriate and effective to use metaphors to explain the situation**

**C. The child has probably not acquired any language skills yet**

**D. It may be helpful to ask the child to write a poem or story to express his or her feelings about the tragedy**

Concrete, literal thinking characterizes the pre-operational stage, so when explaining a tragedy to a child at this level the best approach is to give a clear, concrete explanation in simple terms and provide reassurance. At this age, children think in the here-and-now, take things literally, and struggle with abstract ideas or multiple perspectives. They benefit from direct facts rather than metaphorical language or hypothetical scenarios. Explain what happened in straightforward terms and use language that the child can grasp. For example, say what occurred in concrete terms, acknowledge that the situation is sad, and reassure the child that caregivers will take care of them. Invite questions and respond honestly but without overwhelming detail, keeping explanations age-appropriate and steady. Metaphors or abstract reasoning are not well understood at this stage, so relying on symbolic explanations would likely confuse the child. If someone suggests that the child has completed all cognitive stages or that the child should write a poem or story to express feelings, those approaches don't fit this stage's capabilities. The emphasis here is on a direct, concrete conveyance of what happened and ongoing support, rather than advanced expressive tasks.

- 8. Which statement about professional competence and development for school social workers is NOT true?**
- A. Social workers should branch out into new practice areas if they attain appropriate training and supervision**
  - B. Social workers should avoid straying beyond their areas of expertise, even if a patient requires services in which they are not well-versed**
  - C. School social workers should approach emerging areas of practice with caution if recognized standards for those areas do not yet exist**
  - D. Social workers should not represent themselves to clients as being competent in areas in which they are not**

Maintaining professional competence means you practice only within the areas where you've demonstrated the necessary knowledge, skills, and credentials, and you expand thoughtfully with solid standards and supervision. Branching out into new practice areas should be guided by established competencies and formal credentials in that area, not by training and supervision alone. Training and supervision are essential, but you also need recognized standards for the new area to ensure safe, effective work for students and families. Without those standards, expanding could compromise quality and ethics. That's why the statement about branching out, even with training and supervision, isn't consistent with competent practice. The other points align with this approach: stay within your current expertise unless there are clear standards and qualifications for the expansion, proceed with caution in emerging areas lacking standards, and never present yourself as competent in areas you cannot demonstrate competence in.

- 9. The organization known as Stand for the Silent was founded by Ty Smalley's family.**
- A. Stand for the Silent**
  - B. Be the Change**
  - C. Bullying Stops Here**
  - D. Hope for Tomorrow**

Stand for the Silent was started by Ty Smalley's family in the wake of his bullying and his death, as a way to honor him and push for anti-bullying work in schools and communities. The organization focuses on empowering students to take a stand against bullying, raise awareness, and provide resources for schools to prevent bullying and support victims. That connection—the family founding the group to address bullying in memory of Ty—is exactly why this option is the right match. The other names don't correspond to the organization created by his family.

**10. Which statement correctly identifies the two spheres of supervision in school social work?**

- A. Administrative supervision and Collegial supervision**
- B. Administrative supervision and Educational supervision**
- C. Collegial supervision and Educational supervision**
- D. Administrative supervision only**

The main idea here is that supervision in school social work operates on two distinct domains: administrative and collegial. Administrative supervision covers the organizational and managerial side—ensuring district policies are followed, evaluating performance, handling scheduling and resources, and maintaining accountability and compliance. Collegial supervision, on the other hand, centers on professional growth through peer support—collaborative case discussions, reflective practice, mentorship, and shared problem solving among colleagues. This combination is why the statement pairing administrative supervision with collegial supervision is the best fit. It acknowledges both the governance side that keeps a program running smoothly and the collaborative, developmental side that helps social workers improve their practice. An option that includes educational supervision would imply a different, more teacher-led form of instruction, which isn't the same as the peer-based development emphasized in collegial supervision. An option that pairs collegial with educational while omitting administrative oversight misses the essential systems-level accountability. And thinking of supervision as administrative supervision only ignores the professional learning that happens through collegial, peer support.

# 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://schoolsocialwork184.examzify.com>**

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

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