

MAHCP Career Profile

Social Workers

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health to social determinants of health, linking the physical, social, emotional, and economic factors and how these impact the client's health and wellbeing. Our assessment and interventions may involve any of these factors.

What does all this mean on a practical level? Well, social workers wear many hats and wear them proudly! We work with clients as counsellors, advocates, mediators, assessors, coordinators/case managers, teachers, and

educators to name a few. Social Workers in health care work with people who are often at the most vulnerable stage in their life, stricken by illness, addiction, homelessness, or grief. A Social Worker in health care may find themselves counselling parents following the death of their child. They may find themselves advocating for addictions treatment for a young person struggling with alcoholism. A Social Worker may find themselves assisting someone with recent paraplegia in adjusting to his/her changed abilities, or helping him locate more accessible housing.

As Social Workers, we are a special breed! We maintain strong beliefs in the innate strength and resiliency of people and their ability to change. We are often challenged, ethically, morally, spiritually, and emotionally in our work as Social Workers. We hear and see things that can be uncomfortable and distressing. Social Workers are trained to be open-minded and non-judgemental in their work. Social Workers are trained to cope with emotionally charged issues and to remain calm in crisis. Social Workers are highly skilled in their interpersonal skills, problem solving skills, their ability to multi-task, and

remain organized. Social Workers are quick learners in health care, as we often work in areas (i.e. HIV, Mental Health, and Oncology) that require specialized knowledge on particular health issues. Social Workers are not afraid to speak out against injustice, within our workplace team or the greater community.

Social Workers in health care generally possess a Bachelor of Social Work degree or a Masters of Social Work degree from an accredited

university. In health care, Social Workers are often required to be registered with the Manitoba Association of Registered Social Workers. Social workers complete a set number of professional development hours every year to maintain their registration. Ongoing education and training often is completed by way of conference/workshop attendance, student supervision and mentoring, committee participation, or research.

Social Work is a challenging profession. People sometimes ask "Why do you do what you do?". Some days the answer is clearer than others, however most social workers will tell you it is for the hope that our work will have an impact in some positive way for a person, a family, or a community. There is great meaning and satisfaction to be had in social work and many of us could not envision ourselves doing anything else!

What is social work you ask? The Canadian Association of Social Workers describes social work as "a professional concerned with helping individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective well-being. It aims to help people develop their skills and their ability to use their own resources and those of the community to resolve problems." Social Workers share a common vision for self-determination, equality, and social justice. We advocate for change, on a personal and political level! Our "client" is broader than simply the person in front of us. Each of us is a member of a family, a workplace, a cultural group, a political environment, and even part of a global community! When problems arise in our lives, often they stem from our relationships with people and environmental factors around us. This "person-in-environment" perspective is what makes social work unique.



MAHCP Members from HSC Social Work

Social Workers work in a variety of settings, including community social service agencies, child welfare agencies, justice and correctional services, school systems, government programs, and health care settings. Additionally, some social workers provide private practice therapy services. The largest employers for social workers in Canada are the health care system, government and social programs. Social Workers work with clients of all backgrounds. Our contact with clients may occur in the client's home, within a facility, in an office setting, or even on the streets! We work with clients "where they are at" figuratively and literally!

Social Workers in health care generally work as part of a multi-disciplinary team. Often, we are also working within a "medical model" system. Social Workers are vital to the health care team, as we bring our own social work perspective to the assessment and treatment of patients. We connect the patients'