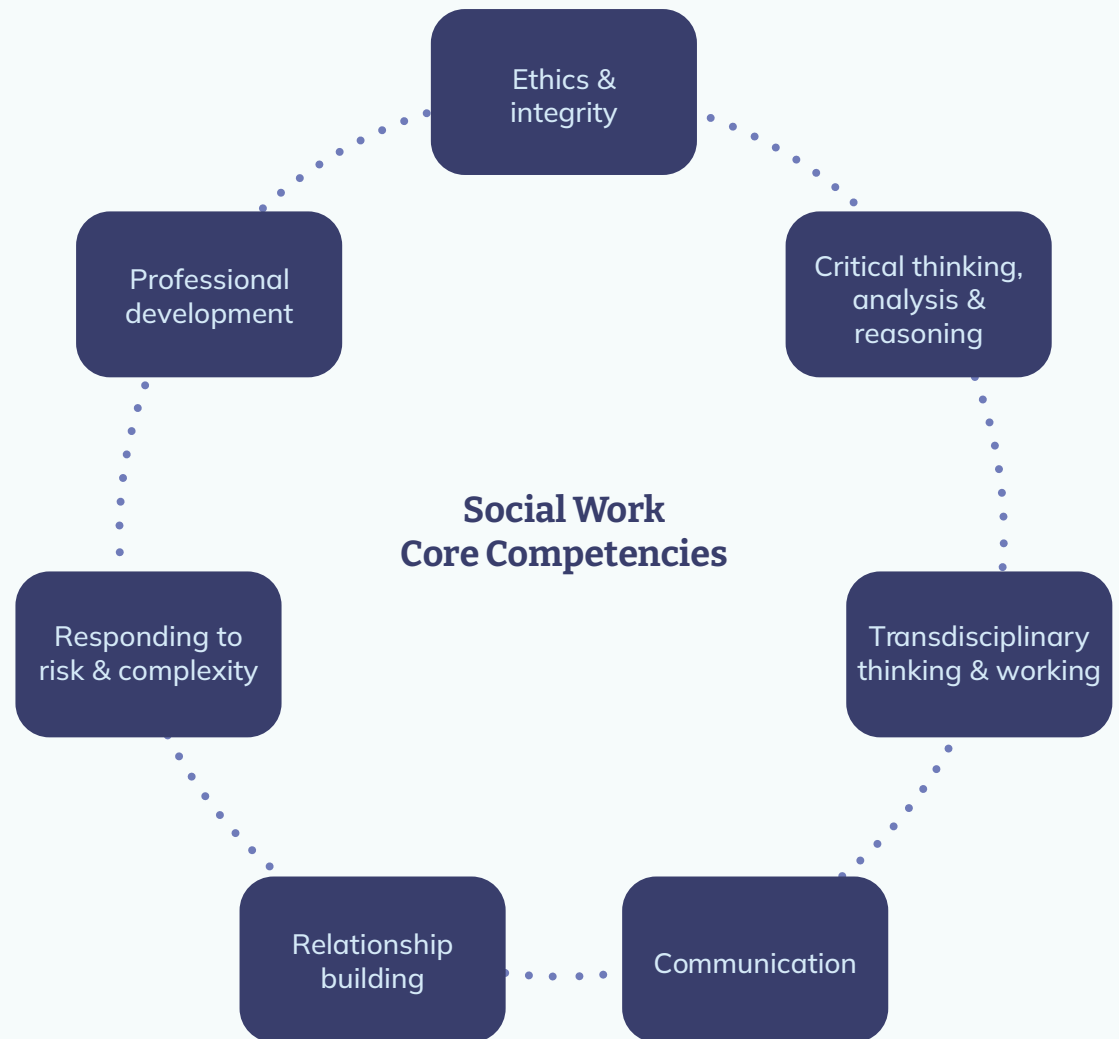


Social Work Core Competencies

Maintaining high professional competence and conduct standards and ensuring professional accountability are primary objectives of the Social Workers Registration Act 2021 (Part 1, 3c-3d). The preparation of Social Work Core Competencies is a key function of the Social Workers Registration Board SA, in accordance with section 10, Part 1 of the Act.

Informed by the AASW Code of Ethics (2020) and Practice Standards (2023), the Social Work Core Competencies represent the essential elements that, together, constitute social work competence for the purpose of regulation. The competencies also provide a critical foundation for understanding and assessing both competence and unprofessional conduct in social work, particularly in the context of fitness to practice considerations.

The Social Work Core Competencies are made up of seven areas of competency and aligned knowledge, skills and values.



Social Work Core Competencies

Competency Area	Knowledge	Skills	Values
<p>1. Ethics and integrity</p> <p>Is accountable and practises ethically and professionally</p>	<p>AASW Code of Ethics (Core ethical principles & General ethical responsibilities)</p> <p>SWRB Code of Conduct</p> <p>Self-awareness</p> <p>Values, morals & ethics</p> <p>Politics of identity</p> <p>Legal responsibilities including privacy, confidentiality, etc.</p> <p>Duty of care issues</p> <p>Colonisation (historic & ongoing)</p> <p>First Nations peoples & history of SW involvement / intervention</p>	<p>Professionalism</p> <p>Self-awareness</p> <p>Reflective practice</p> <p>Reflection on practice</p> <p>Ethical reasoning</p> <p>Ethical decision-making (process + articulation)</p> <p>Articulate legal responsibilities (including to service users)</p> <p>Cultural sensitivity</p> <p>Record keeping, case noting and documentation</p>	<p>Respect for persons</p> <p>Professional integrity</p> <p>Honesty</p> <p>Trustworthiness</p> <p>Open-ness</p> <p>Sensitivity</p> <p>Accountability</p> <p>Service</p>
<p>2. Critical thinking, analysis and reasoning</p> <p>Uses higher order thinking to examine, interpret, critique, evaluate and draw conclusions.</p>	<p>Difference between fact and opinion, observation and interpretation.</p> <p>Structural understanding</p> <p>Power relations</p> <p>Critical understanding of political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental, and cultural factors.</p> <p>Indigenous knowledges & perspectives</p> <p>Social work & whiteness</p>	<p>Constructing arguments and questions</p> <p>Apply logic and reasoning to make sense of information and connections between ideas</p> <p>Reasoning using evidence</p> <p>Structural analysis</p> <p>Identify and critique assumptions</p> <p>Questioning and curiosity</p> <p>Reflective practice</p>	<p>Social justice</p> <p>Respect for persons</p> <p>Professional integrity</p> <p>Open mindedness</p> <p>Curiosity</p> <p>Fairness</p>



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<p>3. Transdisciplinary thinking and working</p> <p>Use & synthesise relevant concepts and insights from multiple disciplines (and sources) to understand, act and collaborate</p>	<p>Diverse forms and origins of knowledge and knowledge creation.</p> <p>Social, cultural, political contexts of/for knowledge</p> <p>Appreciation of the politics of knowledge</p> <p>Intersection of values, beliefs & assumptions with ways of knowing</p> <p>Knowledge of relevant systems & interconnections</p>	<p>Sensitivity in negotiating and managing difference (of background, approaches, processes, strategies, etc)</p> <p>Information gathering and evaluation</p> <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Teamwork</p> <p>Communication (written, oral)</p> <p>Analysis & interpretation</p> <p>Represent the profession</p> <p>Adapt to varying needs, conditions & contexts.</p> <p>Work within and across systems</p>	<p>Social work ethics</p> <p>Social work identity</p> <p>Social justice</p> <p>Respect for persons</p> <p>Professional integrity</p> <p>Respect for / valuing diversity</p> <p>Collaboration</p>
<p>4. Communication</p> <p>Interacts positively and effectively with others, including colleagues and service users, and in individual and group settings.</p> <p>Conveys information clearly in writing</p>	<p>Communication principles and processes</p> <p>Perception & bias</p> <p>Self-awareness & impact of self on others</p> <p>Sociocultural influences and contexts for communication</p>	<p>Communicates and relates to others effectively & appropriately</p> <p>Active and reflective listening</p> <p>Asking purposive, explorative and clarifying questions</p> <p>'Reaching for feeling / meaning'</p> <p>Dealing with differences</p> <p>Communicate in writing for a range of purposes & audiences</p> <p>Working with interpreters</p> <p>Rapport building</p>	<p>Respect for persons</p> <p>Respect for / valuing diversity</p> <p>Cultural humility & sensitivity</p>



Social Work Core Competencies

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<p>5. Relationship Building</p> <p>Builds constructive working relationships with diverse clients to explore / resolve difficult, complex and sensitive issues</p>	<p>Contemporary SW theories, approaches & practices</p> <p>Relevant knowledge and theory from other disciplines (e.g. child development)</p> <p>Self-awareness & impact of self on others</p> <p>Personal – political (impacts of the structural on individuals, groups & communities)</p> <p>Politics of identity</p> <p>Ongoing impacts of colonisation for First Nations peoples (& contact with SW)</p> <p>Social work & whiteness</p>	<p>Rapport building</p> <p>Engagement</p> <p>Active and reflective listening</p> <p>Asking purposive, explorative & clarifying questions</p> <p>‘Reaching for feeling / meaning’</p> <p>Having difficult conversations</p> <p>Dealing with / negotiating differences</p> <p>Identifies and negotiates goals, tasks and priorities</p> <p>Name, explore and address sensitive or difficult issues</p> <p>Cultural sensitivity & humility</p> <p>Integration of theory & practice</p> <p>Reflection on practice</p>	<p>Respect for persons</p> <p>Respect for / valuing diversity</p> <p>Cultural humility & sensitivity</p> <p>Fairness</p> <p>Social justice</p> <p>Compassion</p> <p>Equity</p> <p>Inclusion</p>
<p>6. Responding to risk and complexity</p> <p>Make informed, defensible and ethically sound decisions taking into account relevant empirical and other evidence, multiple / conflicting interests, risks, etc.</p>	<p>AASW Code of ethics</p> <p>SWRB Code of conduct</p> <p>Legislative & ethical responsibilities</p> <p>Violence and abuse</p> <p>Vulnerability</p> <p>Risk, harm and safety considerations</p> <p>Dangerousness</p> <p>Trauma</p> <p>Trauma & violence-informed practice</p> <p>Behaviour change – process, challenges & interventions</p> <p>Cultural & other contexts</p>	<p>Identify / assess risk and safety concerns and act accordingly</p> <p>Practice with challenging service-users & contexts</p> <p>Referral & liaison</p> <p>Balance client, legal/ organisational and ethical interests</p> <p>Interpret & apply legislation</p> <p>Decision-making strategies and process</p> <p>Ability to articulate decision-making logic and rationale</p>	<p>Respect for persons</p> <p>Social justice</p> <p>Safety (including right to safety)</p>



Social Work Core Competencies

Competency Area	Knowledge	Skills	Values
<p>7. Professional development</p> <p>Is committed to personal and professional development and engages in regular supervision</p>	<p>Self-knowledge / awareness Currency (research literature) Contemporary SW theories, approaches & practices Importance of reflection and supervision</p>	<p>Reflexivity and critical reflection Self-care Recognise limits of one's own knowledge, skills, competence Seek support/guidance when appropriate (well-being, skills, knowledge) Actively seen and engage in supervision Access professional learning & development opportunities</p>	<p>Service Professional integrity Personal wellbeing Social work identity</p>

