

Course Title: Human Behavior and the Social Environment
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I. **Course Description**

Social Work 350 involves a study of the person in his/her environment using a systems-based ecological model of human behavior and development. Knowledge about developmental stages and tasks of persons as biological, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual creatures are integrated as the “person” is followed through the life cycle. Theoretical frameworks from prerequisite courses are integrated to enable students to assess micro, mezzo, and macro influences on human behavior and development.

II. **Texts**

Kotlowitz, Alex. (1991). *There are no children here: The story of two boys growing up in the other America*. New York: Doubleday.

Liebow, Elliott. (1993). *Tell them who I am: The lives of homeless women*. New York: The Free Press.

Mouw, Richard. (1992). *Uncommon decency: Christian civility in an uncivil world*. Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press.

Saleeby, Dennis (2002). *The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice, 3e*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Zastrow, C. and Kirst-Ashman, K.K. (2004). *Understanding Human Behavior and the Social Environment, 6e*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

III. **Course Outcomes**

A. **Knowledge** – Upon completion of this course, students will have increased their knowledge of:

1. Theories about clients with respect to diversity (EP 4.1 a-d)
2. The forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination in relation to human flourishing (EP 4.2 b-e, g)
3. Theories and policy that advance social and economic justice as it maps onto human development (EP 4.1 b, d; 4.2 a-e; 4.5 l)
4. Current issues of the social work profession in regard to the social environment and human behavior (EP 4.3 e; 4.4 a; 4.5 b, c)
5. Theories about bio-psycho-social-spiritual development (EP 4.2 a-c; 4.3 a-e)

6. Theories about family development (EP 4.3 a-e)
7. Value and ethical issues that interface with course content from the perspective of the profession's code of ethics and a Reformed worldview (EP 4.0 b, c)
8. The potential for client system change within the context of Reformed thinking and recognize individual and corporate responsibility to work towards economic and social justice (EP 4.0 b, c; EP 4.1 b; 4.2 f-g)

B. Skills – Upon completion of this course, student will have increased competencies in:

1. Applying interventions that include issues about diversity to specific client situations (EP 4.1 a-d)
2. Demonstrating professional use of self with client systems (EP 4.0 b; 4.1 a; 4.5 a, c, d, e, g)
3. Assessment of various size client systems that lead to generalist interventions in practice with client systems (EP 4.5 c, d, e, g)
4. Using bio-psycho-social theories in interventions with client systems (EP 4.3 c; 4.5 a, c, g)
5. Analyzing the impact of social policies on client system well-being (EP 4.4 a, b)
6. Evaluating research studies that relate to the social environment and human behavior (EP 4.6 a, b)
7. Applying the findings of research studies to assessment and intervention (EP 4.5 b, c, g, i; 4.6 a, b)
8. Evaluating practice with supervision (EP 4.5 g)
9. Using communication skills based on needs related to diversity and different abilities (EP 4.1 a; 4.5 b, c, g)
10. Self assessing personal values, feelings, and attitudes towards various client systems and oneself as a system participant in change (EP 4.0 a; 4.1 a, d)
11. Communicating through classroom discussion, presentations, projects, and written assignments (EP 4.5 g)

C. Values – Upon completion of this course, students will have increased awareness of and sensitivity to:

1. Respecting the dignity of clients (EP 4.0 c)
2. Upholding client confidentiality (EP 4.0 c; 4.5 g)
3. Respecting client self-determination (EP 4.0 c)
4. Relating to clients in a non-judgmental way (EP 4.0 b, c)
5. Respecting cultural and social diversity (EP 4.0 c; 4.1 a)
6. Maintaining a professional relationship with clients (EP 4.0 c; EP 4.5 c, d, g)
7. Promoting social and economic justice (EP 4.0 c; 4.2 c, d, e)

IV. **The Liberal Arts Foundation**

Students are expected to integrate previously acquired theoretical knowledge from the liberal arts foundation in understanding human behavior and the social environment. Students will need knowledge from the natural and social sciences to help assist them in understanding and assessing micro and macro influences upon human behavior, including the needs of vulnerable and oppressed populations. Students will use their core study of foreign language, the arts, and the humanities to appreciate human diversity. Students will build on oral and written communication and critical thinking skills as they write papers, make presentations, and participate in class discussions.

V. **Professional Foundation Curriculum Content**

The course content of Social Work 350 builds on material contained in SW 240 and SW 250. SW 240 provides students with an introduction to Human Behavior in the Social Environment, an overview of systems theory, and an introduction to the profession's core values and commitments to diversity, populations-at-risk, and social and economic justice. SW 250 exposes students to diversity and inequality and promotes an appreciation for this diversity and sensitivity for populations at risk. This material provides the foundation for this course to further explore how individual and family differences shape the development of the person and family within the context of a bio-psycho-social perspective as well as how larger systems shape individuals and families. During the course students examine foundational questions to consider when evaluating various theories which assist them as they pursue further research studies in SW 320, as they reflect on policy analysis issues (SW 360), and as they begin the first of their practice courses (SW 370). Content regarding group, organizational, and community development is introduced in this course and further explored in SW 371, 372, and 373. In addition, students will have further opportunity to apply the knowledge, skills, and values explored in this course in the practice courses SW 370, 371, and 373 and ultimately culminating in the social work practicum (380/381).

Within the course, the three curriculum foundation areas - - social work values and ethics, diversity, and populations-at-risk and social and economic justice - - are examined from both a theoretical and a practice orientation. Students consider the values and ethics of the social work profession and how these influence our understanding of human behavior and the social environment. Diversity content is explored throughout the course as students explore the personal and societal impact of diversity on human behavior and the social environment. In addition, populations-at-risk and social and economic justice are also discussed in the course as students consider the how social and economic justice issues can significantly impact personal, family, group, organizations, and community development. Demographic trends related to populations-at-risk are also discussed.

VI. Course Overview

- A. Introduction
 - 1. Description of SW 350 as a course and its place in the curriculum.
 - 2. Relationship of SW 350 to SW 250; the variable impact of society and culture on vulnerable populations is reviewed as a general framework implicit to the rest of the course. Ethnocentrism and racism, gender and sexism, prejudice and discrimination, social and economic forces, and social justice issues are reviewed.
 - 3. Review of foundation knowledge and purpose of social work; value and ethical base of social work.
 - 4. Reformed Christian perspective
 - 5. Review of assumptions undergirding a strengths perspective.
- B. HBSE's Theoretical Underpinnings
 - 1. Traditional and alternative paradigms
 - 2. Meta-theoretical perspectives
 - 3. Mid-range theories
 - 4. Cognitive, moral, and spiritual frameworks
 - 5. Organizational and community frameworks
 - 6. Evaluative criteria for theory use in social work/HBSE
- C. Theoretical Applications Across the Lifespan
 - 1. Adolescence and Young Adulthood
 - a. Biological, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of human development and behavior (HDAB)
 - b. Applications: Pregnancy, eating disorders, effects of poverty
 - 2. Conception, Infancy, and Childhood
 - a. Biological, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of human development and behavior (HDAB)
 - b. Theoretical applications: Abortion, assisted reproduction, infant mortality, poverty; foster care
 - 3. Middle Adulthood
 - a. Biological, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of human development and behavior (HDAB)
 - b. Theoretical applications: Divorce; sexual orientation; diverse family structures/function; work
 - 4. Later Adulthood
 - a. Biological, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of human development and behavior (HDAB)
 - b. Theoretical applications: Wellness; caregiving; frailty; dementias; end-of-life concerns
- D. Groups, Organizations, and Communities as social systems and their impact on individual and family development. This content is addressed in theoretical applications and also covered more extensively in SW 371 and SW 372.

VII. Course Requirements

- A. Class participation and dialogue are expected for your personal and professional growth. Clear communication is an essential skill for social work practice. Thus, conviction, confidence, and professional integrity are encouraged as important qualities in a profession committed to healing, justice, and human compassion. Finally, cultivate an inquisitive heart by asking questions and listening carefully.

Class time involves lectures, debating current social issues relating to human development, critiquing videos, learning from guest speakers, discussing readings, and small group activities. You are expected to complete the reading assignments on time as outlined in the schedule. You are held responsible for the readings not directly discussed in class as well as those discussed in class. Attendance is taken; more than two absences will result in a lower final grade.

- B. Reading Quizzes - - Five quizzes are given. These quizzes will evaluate your knowledge and comprehension of class lectures and the readings. You are expected to take the quizzes at the scheduled times.
- C. Developmental Assessment - - Each student will complete a modified developmental assessment utilizing the framework provided by the instructor. This assignment is intended to increase students' self-awareness as well as orient students to pertinent information related to developmental assessments utilizing a multi-dimensional approach. More information is provided in a subsequent handout.
- D. Integrative Assignments - - Each student will complete two integrative assignments using two assigned books, *There are no children here* by Kotzlowitz, and *Tell them who I am* by Liebow. Assignment details are provided in a subsequent handout.
- E. Annotated Bibliography - - In lieu of a final exam, each student will prepare an annotated bibliography on a topic of his/her choosing, congruent with course material. Assignment details are provided in a subsequent handout.

VIII. Instructional Accommodations

xx will make reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented disabilities. Students should notify the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Student Academic Services, HH 455. Students should also notify the instructor within the first two weeks of the semester.

IX. **Weekly Schedule**

Week	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
Week One: Feb. 1 and 3	Introduction to Course; Traditional and Alternative Paradigms	Read Z and K-A: Chps. 1, 5	
Week Two: Feb. 8 and 10	Theory Loading: Traditional Approaches in Sociology and Psychology	Begin reading Kotzlowitz	Feb. 10: Reading Quiz on Z and K-A chps. 1,5;
Week Three: Feb. 15 and 17	Mid-Range Theories in SW		
Week Four: Feb. 22 and 24	Cognitive, Moral, and Spiritual Development		
Week Five: March 1 and 3	Theory Application (adolescence and y.a.): Eating Disorders, Pregnancy	Read Z and K-A, chps. 6,7,8	March 1 – Kotz. Paper Due;
Week Six: March 8 and 10	Theory Application: continued		March 10 – Reading Quiz on Z and K-A, chps 6,7,8
Week Seven: March 15 and 17	Spring Break – No class		
Week Eight: 22 and 24	Theory Application (infancy and childhood): Abortion, Assisted Reproduction	Read Z and K-A, chps. 2,3,4	
Week Nine: March 29 and 31	Theory Application: Poverty		March 31 – Reading Quiz on chps 2,3,4
Week Ten: April 5 and 7	Theory Application: Divorce; Sexual Orientation; Family Structure/Function; Work	April 5: Read Z and K-A, chps 10, 11, 12, 13 Begin reading Liebow	April 5: Developmental assessments due to interviewer April 7: Developmental assessments due to instructor
Week Eleven: April 12 and 14	(continued from previous week)		April 14 – Reading Quiz on chps 10, 11, 12, 13
Week Twelve: April 19 and 21	Theory Application: Wellness; Caregiving; Frailty; Dementias; End-of-Life Concerns	Read Z and K-A, chps. 14, 15, 16	April 21 – Liebow Paper Due

Week Thirteen: April 26 and 28	(Continued from previous week) No class on April 26 – Advising Recess		April 28 - - Reading Quiz on Z and K-A, chps. 14, 15, 16
Week Fourteen: May 3 and 5	(continued from previous week)	Read <i>Uncommon Decency</i>	
Week Fifteen: May 10	Christian civility		Prepare discussion question responses for class
Final Exam: May 18 at 1:30			Annotations Due

X. Final Evaluation

Assignments are weighted as follows:

Reading Quizzes 500 points
(100 points each)

Developmental Assessment 100 points

Integrative Assignments 200 points
(100 points each)

Annotated Bibliography 100 points
Total **900 points**

Final grades are determined as follows:

96% or higher – A	77% up to 80% - C+	60% up to 64% - D-
92% up to 96% - A-	74% up to 77% - C	Below 60% - F
88% up to 92% - B+	70% up to 74% - C-	
84% up to 88% - B	67% up to 70% - D+	
80% up to 84% - B-	64% up to 67% - D	

XI. **A Caveat:** The schedule and procedures in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.

Integrative Assignment #1

Your family, LeJoe's family, and a social systems perspective

This assignment is intended to encourage you to apply a social systems perspective to two family systems with whom you are familiar, your own and LeJoe's. In effect, you will be doing a generic social systems assessment for two different families. To complete the assignment, discuss the themes listed below. This assignment should be no longer than 14 pages (typewritten, double-spaced, 12 point font) and shorter papers are welcomed. As a guide, write no more than one page about your family for each question and no more than one page for LeJoe's family for each question. Use the Kotzlowitz book and the Zastrow text as resources.

1. Describe yourself as a bio-psycho-socio-cultural being. Do the same for either Lafayette or Pharoah. Compare and contrast with your family.
2. Describe your family as a social system. Identify (or sketch) the significant subsystems that makeup your family. Do the same for LeJoe's family. Compare and contrast with your family
3. Describe the suprasystem elements that have been influential in your life. Do the same for LeJoe's family (if you prefer, use Brofenbrenner's system levels). Compare and contrast with your family.
4. Describe the major "macro" events and factors (current and historical) that have influenced your personal and professional development and worldview (i.e., political or social movements, economic events, etc.). Do the same for LeJoe's family. Compare and contrast with your family.
5. Discuss the consequences of diversity, discrimination, and oppression on your personal and/or professional development. Do the same for LeJoe's family. Compare and contrast with your family.
6. Discuss the values you bring with as you progress through you life. Do the same for LeJoe's family. Compare and contrast with your family.
7. If LeJoe and her family were here, what do you think they would identify as strengths in your family? What strengths do you observe as you read about LeJoe and her family? Compare and contrast with your family. What, if anything, would you like to learn more about from this family?

Evaluation: Your paper will be evaluated in light of the following criteria:

1. Accurate identification and explanation of appropriate themes for each question.
2. Thoughtful and analytic comparisons between the two social systems.
3. Writing mechanics – grammar, sentence and paragraph construction, clear and succinct communication of ideas, etc.

Integrative Assignment #2
Tell them who I am: The lives of homeless women

The purpose of this paper is to allow you an opportunity to:

- reflect upon a number of themes and issues previously addressed in this course through readings and/or discussions,
- and to demonstrate your ability to operationalize these themes and ideas in the context of a particular social problem (homelessness) and a particular stage of development (adulthood).

To complete this assignment, answer the following questions. Use the Zastrow text and Liebow text as resources. Your paper should be in the 12-14 page range (typewritten, double-spaced, 12 point font).

1. What was Liebow's intent in writing this book? Does he succeed, in your opinion? Support.
2. What data sources does Liebow use in this book? How does he gather data? How does he insure that his conclusions have integrity?
3. From what sociological perspective does Liebow work? Defend your position.
4. Liebow, the women with whom he works, and the organizations with whom the women interface offer varied reasons for homelessness. What are those reasons, and by whom are these explanations held? To what philosophic postures of social welfare do these reasons relate? After reading this book, how would you answer the question of "Why are these women homeless?"
5. Working from a strengths perspective, what individual and collective strengths of homeless women are present in this ethnography? How do these women survive in often sub-human conditions? How do they cope and what keeps them going? What posture does Liebow adopt in order to build rapport with the women, and how is this congruent with a strengths perspective?
6. If policy practitioners were to take seriously the expertise of the women portrayed here, what kind of homeless shelter might be designed as one best able to support women as they move out of the homelessness toward greater self-sufficiency and greater ability to meet basic needs?
7. How does the experience of homelessness shape or affect the "normal" developmental tasks of adulthood?
8. What ethical dilemmas does Liebow encounter in his work? How does he resolve these?

9. What are the strengths of Liebow's work? What suggestions for improvement of his research or presentation of research might you suggest?

Evaluation: Your paper will be evaluated in light of the following criteria:

1. Accurate identification and explanation of appropriate themes for each question.
2. Thoughtful and analytic discussion using citations when appropriate.
3. Writing mechanics – grammar, sentence and paragraph construction, clear and succinct communication of ideas, etc.

Human Behavior and the Social Environment: An annotated bibliography

- I. Objectives:
 - A. To strengthen and demonstrate your understanding of human behavior in the social environment by applying a systems-based perspective to a current issue in social work.
 - B. To strengthen and demonstrate your critical thinking and analytical skills.
 - C. To demonstrate and strengthen your writing and library research skills.

- II. Process
 - A. Select a current critical issue or concern in social work practice that interests you. It should be one where working with diversity, populations-at-risk, and justice issues are prevalent. (Note: the HBSE Educational Policy Statement is included at the end of this assignment. You might find it useful to read through a few times to better understand what HBSE is all about!).

Provide a one-page introduction of your issue/concern (is, what is the problem, relevant demographics, etc.)
 - B. From the **current** scholarly literature (i.e., professional journals, academic books published since 2000), compile ten annotations (articles from professional journals, chapters from academic books) that connect to your selected critical issue or concern. In order to find ten annotations that will meet the specifications noted below (II.D), you will likely need to read through at least twenty articles or chapters.
 - C. Each annotation should be approximately one page (typewritten, double-spaced, 12-point font). Your annotation should:
 - briefly summarize the article (one paragraph), identify the particular system (micro, mezzo, exo, or macro) to which the article is directed (i.e., your issue is poverty, and this article discusses poverty as a result of individual shortcomings; hence it is directed at the microsystem), the relationship of the article to your concern (for instance, the author is interested in understanding causes or evaluating interventions, etc.), and the orientation of the author to your concern (prefers a biological, psychological, and or social context). Whenever possible, link the latter to larger theoretical frames addressed in the text book or discussed in class.
 - the usefulness of this article to your understanding of your issue/concern (if you read an article and cannot figure out how it is useful or helpful, do not include it in your annotations).

- D. Specifications – be sure that your annotations represent a broad view of your issue/concern. Do not, for instance, select all annotations that reflect intervention at the micro level, or all annotations that provide a macro explanation for your issue/concern. Instead, your annotations as a whole should have balance between looking at factors that contribute to your problem (some would say “cause” your problem) and intervention, and balance between the four systems noted above (at least two submissions for each system).

III. Details:

- A. Time: Your annotations are due at final exam time.
- B. Format: Your final product must be proofread for grammar and spelling, and typewritten. **APA** is to be used for citing in the body of your paper and at the end of the annotation. If you are unsure of what this is, consult the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association or The Riverside Handbook. Both are on reserve in the library under Social Work 240 380.
- C. Evaluation: Your annotations will be evaluated in light of the following criteria:
- The quality of your introductory page describing your concern and its relevance to social work;
 - the quality and range of your ten annotations;
 - writing mechanics

Curriculum Policy Statements re Required HBSE Foundation Content

EP 4.3 Human Behavior and the Social Environment

Social Work education programs provide content on the reciprocal relationships between human behavior and social environments. Content includes empirically based theories and knowledge that focus on the interactions between and among individuals, groups, societies, and economic systems. It includes theories and knowledge of biological, sociological, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development across the life span; the range of social systems in which people live (individual, family, group, organizational, and community); and the ways in which social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being.

Developmental Assessment

Each student will complete a modified developmental assessment utilizing the framework provided by the instructor. This assignment is intended to:

- increase students' self-awareness about what it is like to ask and answer social work assessment questions;
- orient students to pertinent information related to developmental assessments utilizing a multi-dimensional approach.
- help students develop skills in interviewing someone, obtaining developmental information, and summarizing the information in an organized and informative manner.

Note on 'modified': This is a modified assessment. You will be interviewing another person to gather information they share and organizing this information into a coherent format. What you will **not** do is add your own level of judgment to the information collected. Take what your interviewee says at face value here and report accordingly. The assessment is also modified in that the interviewee should use good judgment regarding what is shared. If you are going through a particularly difficult time in your life, or have "issues" that you know need professional attention, please see someone in the Broene Center. Do not put your interviewer in the role of a professional social worker.

This assignment has several steps, so please read carefully and plan accordingly.

1. **Read through assessment protocol.** If questions are asked for which you do not know the answer as it applies to you, call someone who knows (parent, guardian, etc) and find out the answers. Do this soon.
2. **You must complete a modified developmental assessment for one person in this class. Obviously this means that in addition to being an interviewer, you will also be interviewed.** The person you interview should not be the person who interviews you.

Certainly this process involves risks. As interviewers, your interviewing skills (or lack thereof) shine through to another person in the class. As interviewees, you are expected to disclose information about yourself that is personal.

Interviewers: Professional conduct is expected of all students when it comes to confidential interviewing. This means that you do not share any part of your interview/assessment of your interviewee (even if you never name the person) with anyone else (not another student, housemate, spouse, parent, etc) - - not now, not ever - - even if the information shared does not seem personal. Violations of this rule will result in immediate expulsion from this course, which will ultimately delay your graduation from this program should you be allowed to continue in the program (a matter for the Social Work Program Committee to decide).

Interviewees: As the person being interviewed, you are challenged to make this assessment as authentic as possible. Subsequently, come prepared to the interview knowing the answers to some of the questions that might be asked. If you feel that some questions are too

awkward or uncomfortable to answer, feel free to state that to the interviewer; the interviewer should respect your wish to not discuss. Similarly, if the interviewer pushes for more detail or depth on a question, you should provide only that information you are comfortable sharing.

3. **On April 5**, provide your interviewee with a copy of your developmental assessment. Also email me a copy of the assessment as a Word attachment. Your assessment should be 6-7 pages in length. Once you receive your assessment from the interviewer, review it carefully and attach an addendum to it. In the addendum, correct any errors made, or make clarifications on whatever you feel necessary to clarify. You should also add more detail or depth to the assessment - - depth or detail you didn't want to share with your interviewer or that perhaps your interviewer did not ask about or include (tell me what the case is.... "I was willing to talk about this but the interviewer didn't ask questions that opened the door for this..." or "I didn't want to share this with the interviewer but here is a bit more detail." The addendum should be 2-3 pages.

Why this step? I want to get a sense for how well the interviewer did his/her work. I also want the final assessment to reflect as thorough an assessment as possible. In other words, if you choose to be superficial with your interviewer, that is fine, but the final product (where you add in comments about your own development) should reflect deeper thought. In the end, I need to know whether you understand one way of doing such assessments.

4. **On April 7**, you will be handing in a developmental assessment about yourself that someone else prepared and on which you commented. **Also**, you should hand in a brief reflection paper (one page typed, single space) on what it was like for you to interview and be interviewed by another person. In addition to your reflections about the experience, think also about any lessons learned or implications for social work practice. End your reflection paper with "Feedback for Interviewer." You should list three things the interviewer did effectively; you should also identify two things for the interviewer to give more thought to. These will be shared with your interviewer as well.

Protocol

Here is a template for doing this developmental assessment. Some qualifiers.....

- This template provides only categories for exploration. You will need to develop questions that address these categories (i.e., move from theory to practice!). Feel free to expand on it and ask your own kind of questions.
- Just because a heading is present, you need not ask about it if it makes you or your interviewee clearly uncomfortable. Also, length constraints prohibit you from addressing every aspect of the template.
- For this assignment, only write up what you are told. Don't make judgments about your colleagues (for instance, "Homer's inability to make eye contact and his slumped over appearance seems to indicate a very poor self-image").
- What you write up as an assessment should be in paragraph form with key headings.

A Multidimensional Framework (Ashford, Lecroy, and Lortie, 2001)

I. Biophysical

A. Growth and Development

Prenatal Growth and Development: Assessment considerations include mother's nutritional status during pregnancy; mother's health status; father's health status, length of gestation; prenatal substance abuse by mother; pregnancy complications; family genetic history; genetic abnormalities; chromosomal abnormalities; and physical birth defects (i.e. cleft palate, heart defects)

Note: What kind of questions can be asked to gather this information? What kind of observations might a social worker make to gather this information?

History of Attaining Developmental Milestones: Assessment considerations include age of first steps, first words, feeding self, dressing self, toilet training, first menses or first nocturnal emission, developing sex characteristics.

Note: What kind of questions can be asked to gather this information? What kind of observations might a social worker make to gather this information?

General Health Status: Assessment considerations include stability of weight; regularity of menstrual periods; regularity of sleep-wake cycle; level of physical activity and level of nutrition; presence of biochemical imbalances; presence of physically handicapping conditions; use of substances; assessment of general appearance (does interviewee look his/her age); and ability to perform activities of daily living.

Note: What kind of questions can be asked to gather this information? What kind of observations might a social worker make to gather this information?

B. Hazards

Problems with General Health Status, including Problems with Any Major Organ System: Assessment considerations include family history of heart disease; respiratory problems, cancer; diabetes; health status of close relatives; cause of death of close relatives and age of death of those relatives; current and past health status; and presence of symptoms related to a major illness.

Note: What kind of questions can be asked to gather this information? What kind of observations might a social worker make

to gather this information? **Think of this ‘Note’ for each heading below.**

II. Psychological

A. Cognitive Development and Information Processing

Attention Span, Memory, Concentration, and Capacity for Abstract Thought: Assessment considerations include ability to focus attention; ability to complete tasks appropriate to age; and capacity for memory.

Learning Abilities and Performance: Assessment considerations include school performance; problem-solving abilities; and capacity for insight and reflection.

B. Attitudes and Emotions

Self-Perception: Assessment considerations include negative and positive perceptions of self; view of self with others; comparison of self with expectation of others; and perception of what others think about the person.

Emotional Responses: Assessment considerations include full range of emotions evident and excessive emotions such as anger, sadness, and frustration.

Self-Statements: Assessment considerations include content of self-talk; amount of irrational ideas present; and relationship between self-talk and problem-behavior (for example, fear and hopelessness).

Perception of Others: Assessment considerations include client’s view of others; client’s view of others’ expectations of client; and extent to which perception is reality-based.

C. Social cognition and Regulation

Social Knowledge: Assessment considerations include client’s understanding of social interactions; client’s view of friendship; and client’s expectations of others.

Capacity for Empathy: Assessment considerations include client’s capacity for perspective taking; client’s sense of morality; and client’s interpersonal understanding of others.

Reality Base: Assessment considerations include client’s cognitive functioning; ability to discern reality; and content of client’s thoughts and perceptions.

Social Skills: Assessment considerations include appropriateness of client's social interactions; client's knowledge of social skills; and client's ability to communicate effectively.

Social Problem-Solving Skills: Assessment considerations include client's ability to generate solutions to problems; client's ability to think of consequences; and client's means-end thinking (steps to solve problems).

Maladaptive Behavior Patterns: Assessment considerations include client's behavioral response to problem situations; client's patterns of behavior that lead to difficulties for self, others, or society; and client's desired behavior changes and patterns.

D. Hazards

Experience of Past Life Events: Assessment considerations include client's description of significant events in childhood' client's experience with parents and other adult figures (especially whether any abuse occurred); client's experience with peers; client's psychosocial living environment; client's history of past diagnosis of a mental disorder; and history of use of antidepressants or antipsychotics.

Experience with recent life events: Assessment considerations include client's description of significant life events in recent years; client's recent experiences with adult and peer figures in his or her life (especially events such as divorce or parent's divorce, death of a loved one); present use of antidepressants or antipsychotics; and use of other prescription drugs.

III. Social

A. Families, Groups, Support Systems, and Context

Family's Boundaries, Systems, and Subsystems: Assessment considerations include open or closed family system; family structure (i.e., enmeshed or disengaged); and how the family defines itself.

Family's Patterns of Communication: Assessment considerations include content and process of interaction; patterns of conflict; and verbal and nonverbal expressions of affect.

Family's Roles: Assessment considerations include role assignments within the family; satisfaction with roles; expectations and definitions of roles; allocation of power; and role strain and support.

Groups: Assessment considerations include patterns of interaction in peer and work groups; influence of group norms and other group dynamics; and behavior of the individual in the group.

Support Systems: Assessment considerations include social supports (family, friends, extended family, social support and self-help groups); institutional supports (child support, welfare, health benefits); access to resources (day care, recreational facilities, police protection); barriers to support systems; and need for new resources and support systems.

Community and Other Environmental Contributions: Assessment considerations include who in the external environment perceive the client's responses as maladaptive; external factors likely to influence client behavior (such as loss of job, aging, relocation); and stressful factors in the environment (poverty, racism, underemployment); client's sense of community, sense of neighborliness, feeling of connection with an identified ethnic group; and others senses of group membership.

B. Multicultural and Gender Considerations

Cultural and Gender Context: Assessment considerations include ethnic or gender identity; degree of acculturation; sexual orientation; language barriers; amount of interaction within and outside the ethnic group; and expectations influence by cultural, gender, or sexual-orientation considerations.

C. Social Hazards

Social Context: Assessment considerations include high rates of unemployment; divorce; poverty; discrimination; inadequate social institutions; and impoverished neighborhoods.

IV. Spiritual - - see related handouts. Select one visual way of completing a spiritual assessment and include that with this paper.