1.3 Discussion Instructions: The Social Worker as an Ethical Advocate

**Getting Started**

In this activity, you will read about the role of the social worker as an advocate. You will also consider the ethical implications of having such a responsibility. You will reflect on how this role relates to your current field placement and your future aspirations as a social worker. You will also review the NASW Code of Ethics, being particularly mindful of the passages related to advocacy and empowerment. Then, you will respond to prompts related to how you view the social work advocate’s role and related ethical dilemmas.



**Resources**

* File: How to Engage in Substantive Discussion Post.pdf
* Article: Advocacy/Empowerment: An Approach to Clinical Practice for Social Work
* Article: Empowerment Through Advocacy and Consciousness-Raising: Implications of a Structural Approach to Social Work
* Web Resource: NASW Code of Ethics



**Background Information**

Both historically and today, an underlying mission of professional social work has been to advocate for the most vulnerable members of society, including orphaned children, homeless individuals, and people with disabilities. While most social workers may not describe their primary role as advocate (their job titles may instead identify them as caseworkers, therapists, or program managers), advocacy is almost always an underlying and significant duty. Because of our interaction with people who are at risk, vulnerable, and often limited in their ability or access to express themselves, social workers are uniquely qualified to speak about the limitations and hardships these people experience.



**Instructions**

1. Review the rubric to make sure you understand the criteria for earning your grade.
2. Read the [**How to Engage in Substantive Discussion Post.pdf**](https://brightspace.indwes.edu/content/enforced/10441-MASTERSWK-562%28P%29/Workshop_1/How%20to%20Engage%20in%20Substantive%20Discussion%20Post.pdf?_&d2lSessionVal=1l4Gs9ATEDofuvB2AP9Dc7Zl2&ou=10441&_&d2lSessionVal=8uoit4EH4n7nVzNhaToTdiJZh&ou=147836) document and apply the guidelines to your weekly discussion posts.
3. Read one of the following articles:
	1. “[Advocacy/Empowerment: An Approach to Clinical Practice for Social Work](https://brightspace.indwes.edu/content/enforced/10441-MASTERSWK-562%28P%29/Advocacy_Empowerment_%20An%20Approach%20to%20Clinical%20Practice%20for%20Social.pdf?_&d2lSessionVal=1l4Gs9ATEDofuvB2AP9Dc7Zl2&ou=10441&_&d2lSessionVal=8uoit4EH4n7nVzNhaToTdiJZh&ou=147836)”
	2. “[Empowerment Through Advocacy and Consciousness-Raising: Implications of a Structural Approach to Social Work](https://brightspace.indwes.edu/content/enforced/10441-MASTERSWK-562%28P%29/Empowerment%20through%20Advocacy%20and%20Consciousness-Raising_%20Implicati.pdf?_&d2lSessionVal=1l4Gs9ATEDofuvB2AP9Dc7Zl2&ou=10441&_&d2lSessionVal=8uoit4EH4n7nVzNhaToTdiJZh&ou=147836)”
4. Review the NASW Code of Ethics <https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ms_ArtLqzeI%3d&portalid=0>
5. Navigate to the threaded discussion and respond to the following prompts:
	1. Explain your view of the social work advocate’s role, and the importance of client empowerment. Support your view with references to the reading material or other professional sources.
	2. Provide an example of an area that needs advocacy at your field placement site or in your population.
	3. List three specific ways that you could apply advocacy principles based on your reading of the journal articles to your example.  Properly cite in APA style references used in your post.
	4. Discuss at least one potential barrier to effective advocacy at your agency and what you could do to eliminate or reduce it.
6. Your initial post is due by the end of the fourth day of the workshop.