

Social Work Practice – Micro vs. Macro

The purpose of the profession of social work, in *all* of its forms, is to promote positive social growth using an integrated view of people within their individual and collective contexts. Some of the common features of social work include the adherence to social work ethics and values, application of problem solving processes, use of a strengths perspective, placing work in a systems context, emphasis on the role of relationships in promoting change, and commitment to advocacy and social brokering.

The distinction between Micro and Macro Social Work practice lies not in the intent or purpose, but rather the level at which the interventions and nature of the contact are focused.

*So what is the difference between the
Clinical (Micro) and Organization and Community Leadership (Macro)
concentration in Social Work?*

Macro practice has been defined as the practice of solving social problems and making change at the community, organizational, and societal levels using professionally guided interventions. It also emphasizes the importance of advocacy and social change efforts directed at large social systems/networks including efforts at the program, agency, system, community, regional, national and international levels.

*Some examples of jobs that would be reflective of macro/OCL practice are:

Administrator Community Educator Grant Writer
Advocacy Director/Liaison/Representative Policy Analyst
Resource Developer Program Evaluator/Manager/Coordinator/Officer
Community Development Specialist Higher Education – Program Coordinator

In the **Clinical (Micro)** concentration, learning is focused on advanced theory, knowledge, values and skills for supporting positive change for individuals, families and small groups. It emphasizes the importance of advocacy and social change efforts directed at individuals/families/small groups – not at the systems in which the participant(s) exists.

*Some examples of jobs/areas that would be reflective of micro/Clinical practice are:

Individual/Group Therapist Supervisor/Administrator Developmental Disabilities
School Social Worker Mental Health Worker
Geriatric Social Worker – Nursing Home/Residential Facility Juvenile Justice/Corrections
Substance Abuse Social Worker in a Medical Setting



Please Take Note:

Although certain employment opportunities may lean towards one type of practice (micro or macro), it is common that there will be job expectations that coincide with both focuses.

The practice done after receiving your MSW will determine which license will be obtained – not the concentration chosen while working towards your MSW.

An advisor can assist with clarification regarding these points if wanted/needed.

Information derived from the following sources:

Ashford, et al, 2001
Morales, Sheafor & Scott, 2010

Pillari & Vinala, 2002
Netting, Kettner & McMurty, 2008

Brueggemann, 1996:3
Hahn, 2013

DiNitto & McNeece, 1990
Zastrow, 1999