



## **CONTENT OUTLINES AND KSAS**

### **Clinical Social Work Licensing Examination**

#### **What are KSAs?**

A KSA is a “knowledge, skills, and abilities” statement. These statements describe the discrete knowledge components that may be tested in each part of the examination, and are the basis for individual test questions.

## ASWB Examination program

### Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

#### Clinical Examination

#### **I. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, DIVERSITY, AND BEHAVIOR IN THE ENVIRONMENT 24%**

##### **IA. HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Theories of human development throughout the lifespan (e.g., physical, social, emotional, cognitive, behavioral)
- The indicators of normal and abnormal physical, cognitive, emotional, and sexual development throughout the lifespan
- Theories of sexual development throughout the lifespan
- Theories of spiritual development throughout the lifespan
- Theories of racial, ethnic, and cultural development throughout the lifespan
- The effects of physical, mental, and cognitive disabilities throughout the lifespan
- The interplay of biological, psychological, social, and spiritual factors
- Basic human needs
- The principles of attachment and bonding
- The effect of aging on biopsychosocial functioning
- Gerontology
- Personality theories
- Factors influencing self-image (e.g., culture, race, religion/spirituality, age, disability, trauma)
- Body image and its impact (e.g., identity, self-esteem, relationships, habits)
- Parenting skills and capacities
- Basic principles of human genetics
- The family life cycle
- Models of family life education in social work practice
- The impact of aging parents on adult children
- Systems and ecological perspectives and theories
- Strengths-based and resilience theories
- The dynamics and effects of loss, separation, and grief

##### **IB. HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT**

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Person-in-Environment (PIE) theory
- Family dynamics and functioning and the effects on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- The dynamics of interpersonal relationships
- Indicators and dynamics of abuse and neglect throughout the lifespan
- The effects of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

## IB. HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT (continued)

- The characteristics of perpetrators of abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- The effects of life events, stressors, and crises on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- The impact of stress, trauma, and violence
- Crisis intervention theories
- The effect of poverty on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- The impact of the environment (e.g., social, physical, cultural, political, economic) on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- Social and economic justice
- Theories of social change and community development
- The impact of social institutions on society
- The impact of globalization on clients/client systems (e.g., interrelatedness of systems, international integration, technology, environmental or financial crises, epidemics)
- Criminal justice systems
- The impact of out-of-home placement (e.g., hospitalization, foster care, residential care, criminal justice system) on clients/client systems
- Theories of couples development
- The impact of physical and mental illness on family dynamics
- Co-occurring disorders and conditions
- The impact of caregiving on families
- Psychological defense mechanisms and their effects on behavior and relationships
- Addiction theories and concepts
- The effects of addiction and substance abuse on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- The indicators of addiction and substance abuse
- Role theories
- Feminist theory
- Theories of group development and functioning
- Communication theories and styles
- Theories of conflict

## IC. DIVERSITY AND DISCRIMINATION

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The effect of disability on biopsychosocial functioning throughout the lifespan
- The effect of culture, race, and ethnicity on behaviors, attitudes, and identity
- The effects of discrimination and stereotypes on behaviors, attitudes, and identity
- The influence of sexual orientation on behaviors, attitudes, and identity
- The impact of transgender and transitioning process on behaviors, attitudes, identity, and relationships
- Systemic (institutionalized) discrimination (e.g., racism, sexism, ageism)
- The principles of culturally competent social work practice
- Sexual orientation concepts
- Gender and gender identity concepts

## II. ASSESSMENT, DIAGNOSIS, AND TREATMENT PLANNING

30%

### IIA. BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL HISTORY AND COLLATERAL DATA

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The components of a biopsychosocial assessment
- Techniques and instruments used to assess clients/client systems
- The types of information available from other sources (e.g., agency, employment, medical, psychological, legal, or school records)
- Methods to obtain sensitive information (e.g., substance abuse, sexual abuse)
- The principles of active listening and observation
- The indicators of sexual dysfunction
- Symptoms of neurologic and organic disorders

### IIB. ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The factors and processes used in problem formulation
- Methods of involving clients/client systems in problem identification (e.g., gathering collateral information)
- The components and function of the mental status examination
- Methods to incorporate the results of psychological and educational tests into assessment
- The indicators of psychosocial stress
- The indicators, dynamics, and impact of exploitation across the lifespan (e.g., financial, immigration status, sexual trafficking)
- The indicators of traumatic stress and violence
- Methods used to assess trauma
- Risk assessment methods
- The indicators and risk factors of the client's/client system's danger to self and others
- Methods to assess the client's/client system's strengths, resources, and challenges (e.g., individual, family, group, organization, community)
- The indicators of motivation, resistance, and readiness to change
- Methods to assess motivation, resistance, and readiness to change
- Methods to assess the client's/client system's communication skills
- Methods to assess the client's/client system's coping abilities
- The indicators of the client's/client system's strengths and challenges
- Methods to assess ego strengths
- The use of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association
- The indicators of mental and emotional illness throughout the lifespan
- Biopsychosocial factors related to mental health
- Biopsychosocial responses to illness and disability
- Common psychotropic and non-psychotropic prescriptions and over-the-counter medications and their side effects
- The indicators of somatization
- The indicators of feigning illness

## IIB. ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS (continued)

- Basic medical terminology
- The indicators of behavioral dysfunction
- Placement options based on assessed level of care
- Methods to assess organizational functioning (e.g., agency assessments)
- Data collection and analysis methods

## IIC. TREATMENT PLANNING

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Methods to involve clients/client systems in intervention planning
- Cultural considerations in the creation of an intervention plan
- The criteria used in the selection of intervention/treatment modalities (e.g., client/client system abilities, culture, life stage)
- The components of intervention, treatment, and service plans
- Theories of trauma-informed care
- Methods and approaches to trauma-informed care
- The impact of immigration, refugee, or undocumented status on service delivery
- Methods to develop, review, and implement crisis plans
- Discharge, aftercare, and follow-up planning
- Techniques used to evaluate a client's/client system's progress
- Methods, techniques, and instruments used to evaluate social work practice
- The principles and features of objective and subjective data
- Basic and applied research design and methods
- Methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research

## III. PSYCHOTHERAPY, CLINICAL INTERVENTIONS, AND CASE MANAGEMENT

27%

### IIIA. THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The components of the social worker-client/client system relationship
- The principles and techniques for building and maintaining a helping relationship
- The dynamics of power and transparency in the social worker-client/client system relationship
- The social worker's role in the problem-solving process
- Methods to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the social worker and client/client system in the intervention process
- The concept of acceptance and empathy in the social worker-client/client system relationship
- The dynamics of diversity in the social worker-client/client system relationship
- The effect of the client's developmental level on the social worker-client relationship
- The impact of domestic, intimate partner, and other violence on the helping relationship
- Verbal and nonverbal communication techniques
- The concept of congruence in communication
- Methods to obtain and provide feedback

### IIIB. THE INTERVENTION PROCESS

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The principles and techniques of interviewing (e.g., supporting, clarifying, focusing, confronting, validating, feedback, reflecting, language differences, use of interpreters, redirecting)
- The phases of intervention and treatment
- Problem-solving models and approaches (e.g., brief, solution-focused methods or techniques)
- The client's/client system's role in the problem-solving process
- Methods to engage and motivate clients/client systems
- Methods to engage and work with involuntary clients/client systems
- Limit setting techniques
- The technique of role play
- Role modeling techniques
- Techniques for harm reduction for self and others
- Methods to teach coping and other self-care skills to clients/client systems
- Client/client system self-monitoring techniques
- Methods of conflict resolution
- Crisis intervention and treatment approaches
- Anger management techniques
- Stress management techniques
- The impact of out-of-home displacement (e.g., natural disaster, homelessness, immigration) on clients/client systems
- Methods to create, implement, and evaluate policies and procedures that minimize risk for individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities
- Psychotherapies
- Psychoanalytic and psychodynamic approaches
- Cognitive and behavioral interventions
- Strengths-based and empowerment strategies and interventions
- Client/client system contracting and goal-setting techniques
- Partializing techniques
- Assertiveness training
- Task-centered approaches
- Psychoeducation methods (e.g., acknowledging, supporting, normalizing)
- Group work techniques and approaches (e.g., developing and managing group processes and cohesion)
- Family therapy models, interventions, and approaches
- Couples interventions and treatment approaches
- Permanency planning
- Mindfulness and complementary therapeutic approaches
- Techniques used for follow-up
- Time management approaches
- Community organizing and social planning methods

### IIIB. THE INTERVENTION PROCESS (continued)

- Methods to develop and evaluate measurable objectives for client/client system intervention, treatment, and/or service plans
- Primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention strategies
- The indicators of client/client system readiness for termination

### IIIC. SERVICE DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT OF CASES

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The effects of policies, procedures, regulations, and legislation on social work practice and service delivery
- The impact of the political environment on policy-making
- Theories and methods of advocacy for policies, services, and resources to meet clients'/client systems' needs
- Methods of service delivery
- The components of case management
- The principles of case recording, documentation, and management of practice records
- Methods to establish service networks or community resources
- Employee recruitment, training, retention, performance appraisal, evaluation and discipline
- Case recording for practice evaluation or supervision
- Methods to evaluate agency programs (e.g., needs assessment, formative/summative assessment, cost effectiveness, cost-benefit analysis, outcomes assessment)
- The effects of program evaluation findings on services
- Quality assurance, including program reviews and audits by external sources

### IIID. CONSULTATION AND INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Leadership and management techniques
- Models of supervision and consultation (e.g., individual, peer, group)
- Educational components, techniques, and methods of supervision
- The supervisee's role in supervision (e.g., identifying learning needs, self-assessment, prioritizing, etc.)
- Methods to identify learning needs and develop learning objectives for supervisees
- The elements of client/client system reports
- The elements of a case presentation
- The principles and processes for developing formal documents (e.g., proposals, letters, brochures, pamphlets, reports, evaluations)
- Consultation approaches (e.g. referrals to specialists)
- Methods of networking
- The process of interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary team collaboration
- The basic terminology of professions other than social work (e.g., legal, educational)
- Techniques to inform and influence organizational and social policy
- Methods to assess the availability of community resources
- Techniques for mobilizing community participation
- Methods to establish program objectives and outcomes
- Governance structures

### IIID. CONSULTATION AND INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION (continued)

- The relationship between formal and informal power structures in the decision-making process
- Accreditation and/or licensing requirements

## IV. PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND ETHICS

19%

### IVA. PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND ETHICAL ISSUES

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Legal and/or ethical issues related to the practice of social work, including responsibility to clients/client systems, colleagues, the profession, and society
- Techniques to identify and resolve ethical dilemmas
- The client's/client system's right to refuse services (e.g., medication, medical treatment, counseling, placement, etc.)
- Professional boundaries in the social worker-client/client system relationship (e.g., power differences, conflicts of interest, etc.)
- Ethical issues related to dual relationships
- Self-disclosure principles and applications
- The principles and processes of obtaining informed consent
- Legal and/or ethical issues regarding documentation
- Legal and/or ethical issues regarding termination
- Legal and/or ethical issues related to death and dying
- Research ethics (e.g., institutional review boards, use of human subjects, informed consent)
- Ethical issues in supervision and management
- Methods to create, implement, and evaluate policies and procedures for social worker safety

### IVB. CONFIDENTIALITY

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- The use of client/client system records
- Legal and/or ethical issues regarding confidentiality, including electronic information security
- Legal and/or ethical issues regarding mandatory reporting (e.g., abuse, threat of harm, impaired professionals, etc.)

### IVC. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF SELF

This section of the exam may include questions on the following topics:

- Professional values and principles (e.g., competence, social justice, integrity, and dignity and worth of the person)
- Professional objectivity in the social worker-client/client system relationship
- Techniques for protecting and enhancing client/client system self-determination
- Client/client system competence and self-determination (e.g., financial decisions, treatment decisions, emancipation, age of consent, permanency planning)
- The influence of the social worker's own values and beliefs on the social worker-client/client system relationship



#### IVC. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF SELF (continued)

- The influence of the social worker's own values and beliefs on interdisciplinary collaboration
- The impact of transference and countertransference in the social worker-client/client system relationship
- The impact of transference and countertransference within supervisory relationships
- The components of a safe and positive work environment
- Social worker self-care principles and techniques
- Burnout, secondary trauma, and compassion fatigue
- Evidence-based practice
- Professional development activities to improve practice and maintain current professional knowledge (e.g., in-service training, licensing requirements, reviews of literature, workshops)