Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1

Understanding Social Work Practice provides an overview of social work practice by grounding students in the purpose of social work, social work competencies, types of client grouping, and the practice framework of engagement, assessment, intervention, termination, and evaluation. A discussion of the licensure of social work, and the tensions in social work, provides students with real-world information about the profession. Students are also introduced to major theoretical perspectives for social work practice, including the ecosystems, social justice, human rights, strengths, and postmodern perspectives.

Chapter 2

In contrast to a straightforward overview of values and ethics, Applying Values and Ethics to Practice provides a brief history of social work ethics and the NASW Code of Ethics (2008), then contrasts the Code of Ethics with the International Federation of Social Workers’ Ethical Statement, and also discusses the limits of ethical codes. A discussion of the intersection of ethics and the law gives students information about the interplay between the two, followed by a discussion of ethical dilemmas and processes for resolving them. Extensive discussion about common practice dilemmas gives students exposure to situations that they may encounter in practice, followed by an emphasis on risk management.

Chapter 3

Individual Engagement: Relationship Skills for Practice at All Levels provides students with the characteristics of core relationships qualities, as well as a description of the specific skills for dialogue with clients at all system levels, including coverage of common communication pitfalls. As the helping relationship includes the dimension of power, the chapter provides extensive coverage of sources of power within relationships, and provides guidance on the use of power through a case study of “Jasmine and the Social Worker.” Students are also provided with
strategies and skills for promoting social justice and human rights within helping relationships.

**Chapter 4**

Assessing and Planning with Individuals: Deepening the Dialogue includes a focus on the assessment and planning process within the global environment in which modern-day social workers live and practice. The chapter begins with a discussion of the history of assessment and then moves to an overview of theoretical approaches to social work practice, both classic and contemporary (strengths, narrative, and solution-focused). The application of evidence-based practice approaches is highlighted. The need for practice knowledge and behaviors in the area of diversity within the assessment and planning phases emphasizes the need for cultural competence. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the relevant skills and practice behaviors in the assessment and planning phases of the intervention process.

**Chapter 5**

Intervening in Context: Initiation, Intervention, Termination, and Evaluation introduces students to key areas of social work practice that will impact virtually every dimension of their professional lives. With an emphasis on theoretical perspectives, students learn to apply various intervention, termination, and evaluation practice behaviors. Traditional and contemporary social work roles are highlighted and discussed. Interventions with individuals are also framed within an empowerment practice approach. Framed within theoretical perspectives for understanding diversity, students are offered an overview of the skills required to be a culturally competent social work practitioner.

**Chapter 6**

The Family: Engagement and Assessment The chapter begins with a history of social work practice with families, grounded within a systems framework. Theoretical perspectives, including narrative and solution-focused, are discussed within the context of the engagement and assessment phases of interventions with families. Students encounter a broad range of family constellations as they read about contemporary family social work. Practice behaviors and skills are presented for achieving engagement and assessment with families.

**Chapter 7**

Intervening with Families: Initiation, Termination, and Evaluation conceptualizes generalist social work practice interventions with families. Continuing with the
theoretical perspectives discussed in Chapter 6, this chapter develops interventions with families using strengths and empowerment, narrative, and solution-focused approaches. Skills and practice behaviors for intervening, terminating, and evaluating family-focused interventions are discussed in detail.

Chapter 8
Social Work Practice with Groups: Engagement, Assessment, and Planning provides students with up-to-date perspectives on social work practice with groups. The chapter opens with an overview of the role of groups within our communities and profession followed by a historical and contemporary perspective on the use of groups for change. The dimensions of group practice are presented within the framework of theoretical perspectives (i.e., narrative and solution-focused). Planning for group interventions, including the engagement and assessment of group members, is emphasized from a practice behaviors perspective.

Chapter 9
Social Work Practice with Groups: Intervention, Termination, and Evaluation Developing and implementing interventions with various types of groups is the emphasis of this chapter. Continuing the framing of skills and techniques within theoretical perspectives, interventions with groups are introduced using the strengths, narrative, and solution-focused frameworks. Models for group intervention are described along with an in-depth examination of the roles, skills, and practice behaviors required for carrying out a group-level intervention. Termination and evaluation of group interventions are also covered.

Chapter 10
Social Work Practice with Communities: Engagement and Assessment introduces students to the concept of community. The chapter defines and discusses types and functions of communities. Students learn about various theoretical perspectives, including contemporary perspectives for community practice. Engagement and assessment concepts, including community-based analysis, evidence-based practice, and community needs assessments, are extensively discussed. Community practice skills are thoroughly covered, as are the implications of global interdependence for community practice in the United States.

Chapter 11
Social Work Practice with Communities: Intervention, Termination, and Evaluation builds on the engagement and assessment content of Chapter 10 to present strategies and techniques for community practice. Using the insights gained about
practice at the individual, family, and group levels, this chapter expands the students’ awareness of social work practice with communities through a discussion of today’s trends and skills for intervention, including community social and economic development, and community organizing. Included in this discussion is coverage of international community practice. Students also learn the knowledge and skills needed for termination and evaluation of community practice.

Chapter 12

Social Work Practice with Organizations: Engagement, Assessment, and Planning covers a challenging client system for beginning practitioners—the organization. Students learn a wealth of practical and theoretical aspects of organizations, including a discussion about the purpose and structure of organizations, power relations within organizations, and social work within host organizational settings. The chapter provides discussion about the elements of an internal assessment of organizations, to include organizational culture, and external assessments as well.

Chapter 13

Social Work Practice with Organizations: Intervention, Termination, and Evaluation uses the foundation built in Chapter 12 to discuss approaches, perspectives, and models for intervening with organizations. This chapter provides extensive coverage of the relationship between theoretical perspectives and organizational change, as well as a practical framework for thinking about generating change and the needed knowledge for a social work generalist in this endeavour. Termination and evaluation of change efforts within organizations, including a discussion about the role of the generalist practitioner in this process, help students see their potential role in a change effort with organizations.