SUMMIT
STUDY GUIDES

LMSW

Diagnostic Assessment

Week 1 Diagnostic

40 Questions • 80 Minutes

Scored across six study areas • Original practice questions

Find your weak areas, then study the chapters that matter most

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How to Use This Material

Take this assessment in one sitting with an 80-minute timer, choosing the single BEST answer for each question. It has 40 questions spread across six study areas in proportion to the ASWB Masters exam. Then score it with the separate answer key and fill in the Weakness Map at the end of the key. The interactive version on the Diagnostic page of the LMSW bonus site scores your Weakness Map automatically.

LMSW Week 1 Diagnostic

40 questions • Answer key and Weakness Map in the separate Answer Key file
Choose the single BEST answer for each question. Allow 80 minutes.

1. Brianna, 15, tells her school social worker that her father hit her with a cord last night, leaving marks she shows on her arm. She is scared that reporting will make things worse at home. What should the social worker do?

- **A.** Tell her a report is required, explain next steps, and plan for her safety
- **B.** Make the report now and let the caseworker explain the process to Brianna
- **C.** Ask Brianna to describe the incident in detail before deciding to report
- **D.** Arrange for Brianna to stay with a relative tonight, then make the report

2. A researcher develops a resilience scale for young adults who have aged out of foster care. To test it, she compares scores with a measure of verbal ability, a trait that should be unrelated to resilience, and finds almost no correlation. This finding MOST directly supports which property?

- **A.** Convergent validity
- **B.** Concurrent validity
- **C.** Discriminant validity

3. Kai, 4, is an enrolled member of his mother's tribe and must enter foster care. The tribe has not set its own order of placement preferences, and its custom does not define extended family differently from federal law. Three homes are available: his paternal aunt, who is not Native American, a tribally licensed foster home, and a state-licensed Indian foster home. Absent good cause, which placement does ICWA prefer FIRST?

- **A.** His paternal aunt, who is not a tribal member
- **B.** A foster home licensed by the child's own tribe
- **C.** An Indian foster home licensed by the state

4. Tomás, 45, tells his social worker in a group private practice that he has decided to divorce his wife. The worker, whose faith strongly opposes divorce, notices an urge to steer the conversation toward reconciliation, an urge that has returned in three sessions despite efforts to set it aside. What should the social worker do?

- **A.** Transfer Tomás to a colleague and explain that another worker may fit better
- **B.** Keep the focus on Tomás's goals and continue setting the reaction aside
- **C.** Discuss the reaction with a supervisor to examine its effect on the work

5. At a staff training at a VA clinic, a presenter says that Jaffee v. Redmond is the case that requires clinicians to warn people their clients threaten. Gloria Banda, an LMSW in the audience, believes the presenter has confused two cases. Which statement accurately describes what the Supreme Court decided in Jaffee v. Redmond?

- **A.** Federal courts recognize a therapist-patient privilege covering clinical social workers
- **B.** Mental health professionals must protect identifiable victims of their clients' threats
- **C.** Social workers must report suspected child abuse to state child protective services

6. Rosa Quispe, 44, speaks Quechua and limited Spanish and does not read either language well. At a substance use treatment program, she needs to decide whether to sign a release allowing the program to share information with her probation officer. The form exists only in English and Spanish, and a telephone Quechua interpreter is available. What should the LMSW do?

- **A.** Have a Spanish interpreter explain the form, since she speaks some Spanish
- **B.** Delay the decision until a written Quechua translation can be obtained
- **C.** Have a qualified Quechua interpreter explain the form before she decides

7. Teodora, 38, has bipolar disorder and has been stable for a year with medication and counseling at a community mental health center. In her last episode she did not realize she was becoming manic until her sister pointed it out. She wants to prevent another hospitalization. What should her relapse prevention plan include?

- **A.** An agreement that she will call her social worker if she starts to feel manic
- **B.** A daily mood rating she logs in an app and reviews at each session
- **C.** Early signs that she and people close to her watch for, and agreed steps

8. An LMSW in a group practice completed a two-day introductory workshop in EMDR. A colleague suggests updating her online profile to describe her as an "EMDR therapist" to attract more trauma referrals. She has not completed full training or supervised practice in EMDR. What should she do?

- **A.** Describe herself as "EMDR-trained," since she has finished formal training in it
- **B.** Leave the training off her profile until she is fully certified
- **C.** List the workshop she completed without claiming to be an EMDR therapist
- **D.** Use the title "EMDR therapist" once her supervisor has approved it

9. A new volunteer at a shelter the day after a flood asks the social worker what she should aim for in her first contacts with survivors. Most survivors have no prior mental health needs and are focused on finding family, food and shelter. Which goal BEST reflects psychological first aid?

- **A.** Reduce initial distress and support survivors' own coping with practical help
- **B.** Help survivors put their experience into words so they can begin to process it
- **C.** Identify survivors with acute stress symptoms so they can be referred quickly
- **D.** Offer brief counseling to survivors who show strong emotional reactions

10. Mr. Okafor, 61, learned two weeks ago that his cancer is terminal. He keeps all appointments, takes his medications and has no treatment decisions pending, but he talks about planning a trip next year and says the doctors "may have it wrong." His wife asks the oncology social worker to make him face the truth. What is the BEST response?

- **A.** Explain that early denial can help him adjust and keep supporting him
- **B.** Arrange a meeting with him and his wife to review the prognosis together
- **C.** Ask his physician to restate the prognosis at his next appointment
- **D.** Screen him for depression, since early denial can mask a low mood

11. A residential program for adolescents set up a token economy to encourage chores and on-time school attendance. Six weeks in, staff report that target behaviors are clearly defined, tokens are given promptly, and residents earn them easily, but residents rarely exchange them, saying the backup rewards, mostly extra television time, are 'boring.' Which change is MOST likely to make the system work?

- **A.** Define the target behaviors more precisely so staff award tokens consistently
- **B.** Ask residents to help choose backup rewards they would want to earn
- **C.** Give tokens right after each behavior instead of at the end of the day
- **D.** Lower the number of tokens needed to exchange for each backup reward

12. At a rural child welfare office, LMSW Andrés must explain to a couple today that their children have been placed in emergency foster care and that a court hearing is set for later this week. The parents speak Mixtec and very little Spanish or English. No in-person Mixtec interpreter is available in the region, but a remote service can connect one within the hour. What should Andrés do?

A. Use a remote Mixtec interpreter by video or telephone today
B. Use a Spanish interpreter and confirm understanding by teach-back
C. Wait until an in-person Mixtec interpreter can travel to the office

13. A social worker at a refugee resettlement agency is assessing the Rahimi family, who arrived from Afghanistan six months ago. The worker wants a tool that captures their reasons for relocating, time in the community, language use, health beliefs, important holidays, and values about family and education. Which tool is MOST appropriate?

A. A genogram
B. An ecomap
C. A culturagram
D. A sociogram

14. In supervision, Fatima Haddad, an LMSW, mentions that for three months she has accepted vegetables from the garden of her client, Mr. Okonkwo, 76, in place of his $10 copay because he insisted. There have been no problems. The agency has a hardship waiver for clients on fixed incomes. What should her supervisor do?

A. Report the arrangement to the agency's compliance office as a billing irregularity
B. Transfer Mr. Okonkwo to another worker and review the boundary issue with Fatima
C. Let the arrangement continue and have Fatima document it, since he initiated it
D. Help Fatima move him to a standard option, such as the agency's hardship waiver

15. Shanice, an LMSW at a community mental health center, meets twice a month with a psychologist from a university eating disorders clinic to discuss two of her clients. The psychologist offers recommendations, which Shanice may adopt or set aside. Her agency supervisor still approves all treatment plans and signs off on her clinical hours. The psychologist has no role in Shanice's career development beyond these cases. Which term BEST describes the arrangement with the psychologist?

A. Clinical supervision
B. Case consultation
C. Professional mentoring

16. Samuel Okafor, 38, was laid off last week. He asks a social worker at a community center how to apply for SNAP food benefits. He has not applied before, has had no problems with any agency, and says his savings and severance will cover food for the next month. Which action is BEST?

A. Ask the SNAP office to review his application on an expedited basis.
B. Give him the application details and help him start it if he wants.
C. Refer him to a food bank, since SNAP approval can take several weeks.

17. An evaluator at a homeless services agency will follow all 200 clients who move into permanent supportive housing this year. She will interview each client every six months for three years. Clients were not selected for their scores on any measure. Which design challenge should she plan for MOST carefully?

A. Cohort effects that arise when different age groups are compared at one time
B. Loss of participants over time, which can leave a less representative group
C. Regression to the mean among clients chosen for their extreme intake scores

18. Sergeant Lopez, 34, has been making steady progress in a VA outpatient PTSD program. In the week of the anniversary of a deadly attack on his unit, his nightmares and irritability sharply increase. He says the same thing happened last year at this time and eased after a couple of weeks. Today's suicide risk screen is negative. What should the social worker do?

- **A.** Continue the current plan, since the rise is an expected, time-limited reaction
- **B.** Ask his VA psychiatrist to review his medication this week given the spike
- **C.** Refer him to the residential PTSD program for more intensive treatment
- **D.** Explore the anniversary pattern with him and build a plan for those dates

19. To establish test-retest reliability for a new 12-item hope scale, a researcher gives it to 150 adults experiencing homelessness at five shelters, then gives it again the next day. Internal consistency at the first administration is high. The two sets of scores are almost identical. Which change would MOST improve this test of reliability?

- **A.** Add more items so the scale's internal consistency rises further
- **B.** Space the two administrations about two weeks apart instead
- **C.** Use a larger sample of participants drawn from more shelters

20. Grace, 45, is in her third session at a counseling agency. She has cancelled her appointment each time her work supervisor has praised her, but she has not linked the two. The social worker decides to bring the pattern to her attention without offering any explanation for it yet. Which statement does this?

- **A.** Many people feel uneasy when someone praises their work in front of others.
- **B.** I've noticed you cancelled after each time your supervisor praised your work.
- **C.** I wonder whether praise feels risky because it raises the bar for next time.

21. Daniel, 38, tells a social worker at an employee assistance program that his days are organized almost entirely around his job as a project manager, his marriage, coaching his son's soccer team and serving on his church council. As a young man he imagined becoming an architect. The social worker, drawing on Levinson, wants to examine the overall design of Daniel's life as it is now. Which concept is the social worker examining?

- **A.** Life structure
- **B.** The Dream
- **C.** Developmental era

22. Leilani Kahale, 27, comes to a community mental health center eight months after a sexual assault. She reports nightmares and sometimes "zones out" during the day for several minutes. She asks not to talk about the assault in detail yet, says she prefers individual sessions, and is not interested in medication. What is the MOST appropriate initial focus of intervention?

- **A.** Beginning a written trauma narrative so she can process the assault
- **B.** Teaching grounding and coping skills and building their relationship
- **C.** Referring her to a support group for survivors of sexual assault
- **D.** Referring her for a medication evaluation to reduce her nightmares

23. Rosa Jiménez, an LMSW at a home-delivered meals program, sees that Mr. Haddad, 79, has unexplained withdrawals from his account, and his nephew now holds his bank card. Rosa hesitates to report to adult protective services. Last year another report she made was not substantiated, and that family threatened to sue her. Which statement BEST answers her concern about liability?

- **A.** State laws generally protect people who report in good faith, whatever the outcome
- **B.** State laws generally protect reporters once investigators substantiate the abuse
- **C.** State laws generally protect reporters when the agency files the report for them

24. A child welfare social worker meets with Rashida the morning after her two children were placed in foster care. She is sobbing, says she cannot think, and asks what she is supposed to do now. The first court hearing is in three days. Applying crisis theory, which approach is MOST appropriate in this meeting?

- **A.** Connect her with a parent partner who has been through foster care
- **B.** Set a case planning meeting for next week, once she has settled
- **C.** Give clear, directive guidance on next steps, such as visits and court
- **D.** Explore the events that led to the removal and her feelings about them

25. A family agency revises its intake form so that each problem area is followed by questions about the client's skills, supports and past successes in that area, such as 'When has this been a little better, and what helped?' The director says the change reflects a particular view of assessment. Which statement BEST describes that view?

- **A.** Problems are assessed together with the client's capacities and resources
- **B.** Problems are seen as products of the person's fit with the environment
- **C.** Problems are defined in measurable terms so that change can be tracked

26. At an emergency shelter, a social worker finds a resident, Kevin, slumped in a chair. He does not respond to his name or a firm shake, his breathing is very slow, and his lips are bluish. He has a pulse. Naloxone is in the shelter's first aid kit within reach, and the worker is trained to use it. What should the social worker do FIRST?

- **A.** Call 911, then place him in the recovery position and stay with him.
- **B.** Have a coworker call 911 while you begin CPR chest compressions.
- **C.** Give naloxone, call 911, support his breathing, and stay with him.
- **D.** Give naloxone, then call 911 if he does not wake within a few minutes.

27. During an assessment at a senior center, Harold Jensen, 78, says his daughter "is always taking over." The social worker is not sure whether he means she helps too much with chores, controls his money, or something else. What should the social worker do NEXT?

- **A.** Ask Harold to describe a recent time his daughter took over
- **B.** Reflect that Harold seems frustrated with his daughter's behavior
- **C.** Screen Harold for possible financial exploitation by his daughter
- **D.** Ask whether Harold would like his daughter to join a session

28. During a family session at a community mental health center, Mrs. Lindqvist answers every question directed to her 16-year-old daughter, Freya. Freya says she cannot decide what to wear without asking her mother, and both say they 'feel each other's moods.' Freya has no friends outside the family and no household caregiving duties. Her parents rarely disagree. Which concept BEST describes this pattern?

- **A.** Parentification
- **B.** Enmeshment
- **C.** Triangulation
- **D.** Cross-generational coalition

29. A toddler is treated for a burn on the chest and right arm. The burn has irregular edges, is deeper near the shoulder and shallower farther down, and has narrow streaks that run downward like drips. The skin around it shows scattered small burned spots. This pattern is MOST consistent with which cause?

- **A.** Forced immersion in hot water
- **B.** Contact with a hot curling iron
- **C.** An accidental spill of hot liquid

30. A child welfare LMSW places Kayla, 4, in emergency foster care. Her father says his grandmother was an enrolled Cherokee Nation citizen, though he himself is not enrolled. The worker's supervisor says Kayla "doesn't look Native" and that ICWA probably does not apply because her ancestry is distant. What should the worker do about Kayla's possible tribal status?

- **A.** Ask the Bureau of Indian Affairs to rule on whether Kayla is an Indian child
- **B.** Leave the question for the court to decide at the hearing from family papers
- **C.** Make sure the tribe is notified so it can decide whether Kayla is eligible

31. Mirela Hoxha, an LMSW at a youth program, learns at a conference that a method she has used for years is now considered less effective than newer approaches. Her clients often say they are satisfied. What should she do?

- **A.** Continue her method while tracking each client's outcomes with a standard measure
- **B.** Review the evidence, seek training in newer approaches, and consult her supervisor
- **C.** Discuss the research with clients and let each one choose whether to change
- **D.** Begin using the newer approach with all new clients starting next month

32. Riley, 30, who is nonbinary and uses they/them pronouns, is admitted to a hospital where the electronic record offers only male or female in a required sex field. The field must match the sex listed with Riley's insurance plan or the claim will be denied. What should the hospital social worker do?

- **A.** Enter the sex listed with Riley's insurer and record their identity and pronouns in the chart
- **B.** Ask IT to add a nonbinary option and hold the field until the system is updated
- **C.** Ask Riley which of the two options they want entered and use that choice throughout

33. A patient at an outpatient substance use disorder program has a seizure in the lobby. He has not signed any consent to disclose his records. While he is unresponsive, the program's social worker receives three requests for information about him. Under 42 CFR Part 2, which request may the program answer without his written consent?

- **A.** His primary care physician, to coordinate his medications this week
- **B.** The responding paramedics, to the extent needed to treat the seizure
- **C.** The hospital's billing office, to confirm coverage for the ambulance

34. A social worker helps neighborhood residents, many of whom have never attended a public meeting, understand a proposed zoning change and prepare to speak for themselves at the planning commission. Which standard of the Code does this MOST directly reflect?

- **A.** Social and political action
- **B.** Social welfare
- **C.** Public participation

35. Darnell, 34, is being released after 18 months in prison. He used heroin daily before incarceration and has not used since. His Medicaid has been reinstated, and he will live with his sister, who does not use drugs. In a reentry planning session, he says he plans to stay clean but admits that his old friends will be around. Which risk is MOST important for the reentry social worker to discuss with him before release?

- **A.** Gaps in health coverage after release can delay his access to treatment
- **B.** Contact with old friends may bring on cravings and lead back to use
- **C.** Unstable housing after release can raise his risk of returning to use
- **D.** Lower tolerance after abstinence makes his former dose potentially fatal

36. Priyanka Rao, an LMSW at a hospital, believes a colleague has billed for group sessions that did not take place. She raised it with him privately, and he denied any problem and refused to discuss it further. She has never reported a colleague and wants to take the next appropriate step. What should she do FIRST?

- **A.** File a complaint about the colleague with the state licensing board
- **B.** Review the hospital's procedures for raising ethics and billing concerns
- **C.** Pull the billing records that show which sessions did not take place

37. Noor, 6, has been anxious since her family moved across the country. In her third session of child-centered (nondirective) play therapy at a child guidance clinic, she buries a small doll family in the sandbox, uncovers them, and buries them again, saying, "They're hiding." Her worried mother has asked the worker to "help her get over the move." What is the BEST response by the social worker?

- **A.** "Maybe the family is hiding because moving to a new house felt scary."
- **B.** "The family is going deep under the sand. They're staying hidden."
- **C.** "Let's build the family a new house now and help them all unpack."

38. Mr. Mahmoud, 55, cares for his father, who has Alzheimer's disease. He tells the social worker that bathing has become a daily battle: his father shouts and refuses, and Mr. Mahmoud ends up yelling back. His father had a full checkup last week, and no pain or new medical problem was found. Mr. Mahmoud says he wants to keep bathing his father himself. What is the BEST intervention?

- **A.** Arrange for a home health aide to take over bathing on some days of the week
- **B.** Suggest he ask the doctor whether pain or an illness could be making bathing uncomfortable for him
- **C.** Help him identify triggers and try simpler steps, offered choices and a better time of day

39. Bianca Moreno, 22, is three sessions from the planned end of treatment for panic disorder at a university counseling center. This week, the week the end date was confirmed, she reports two mild panic episodes. She used her breathing skill during one and it helped. Which response is BEST?

- **A.** Refer her to a new therapist to address the panic that has returned.
- **B.** Extend services past the planned end until the symptoms resolve.
- **C.** Suggest a medication evaluation to address the returning panic.
- **D.** Explore her feelings about ending and review the skills that helped.

40. Joaquin Herrera, 22, lives in a rural town 200 miles from the agency and will receive video counseling for depression. During the consent discussion, the LMSW reviews the benefits and risks of telehealth. What should the consent plan ALSO include?

- **A.** An agreement that he will call 988 if he feels unsafe between sessions
- **B.** A schedule of brief check-in calls between sessions in the first month
- **C.** Emergency resources near his home and a support person to contact in a crisis