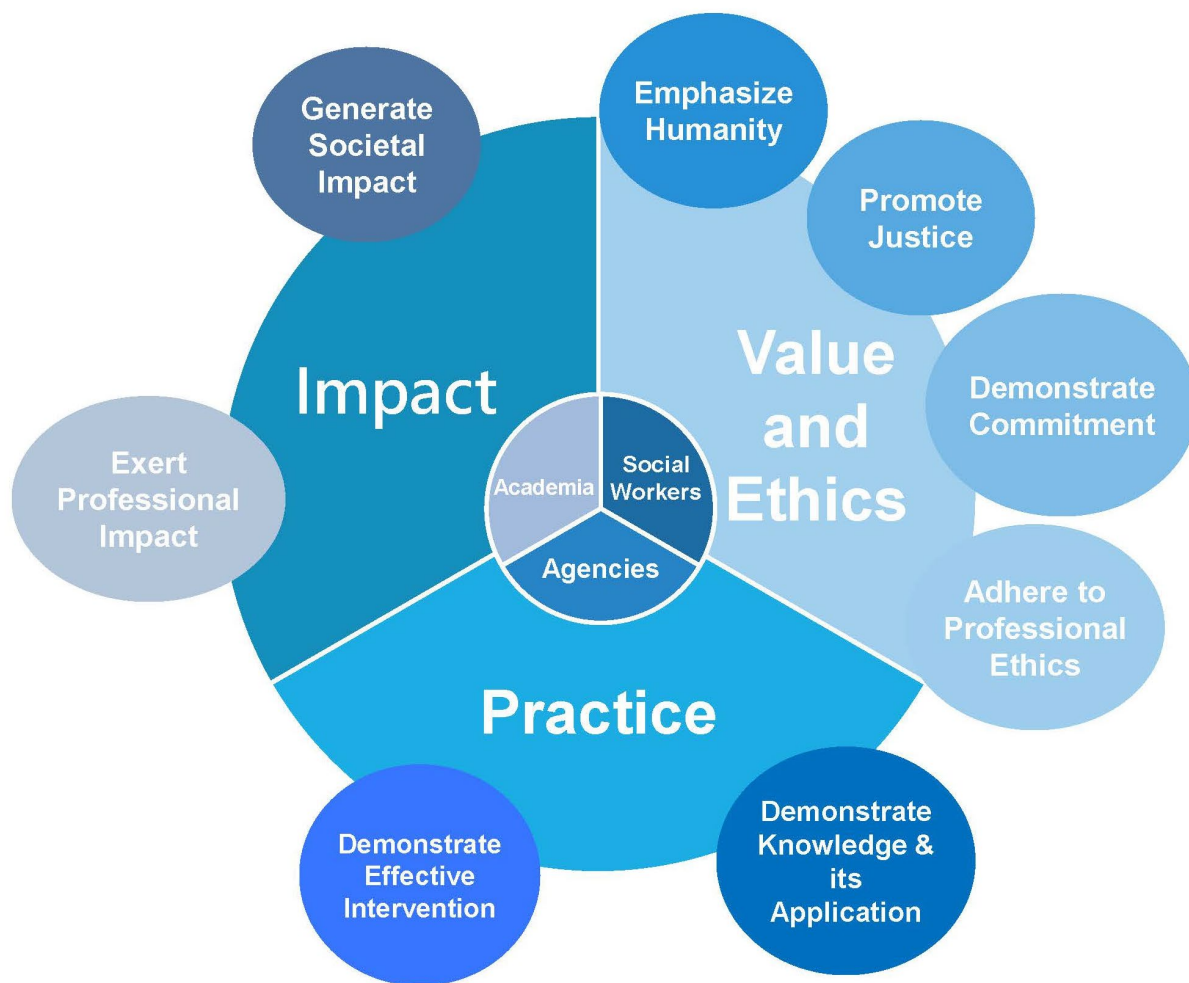


**Specific Professional Competency Framework  
for Mental Health Social Workers  
(Tripartite, three-tier eight domains and 50 aspects)**

**(HKASW, 2023)**



\* Unique items in PCF for Mental Health Social Worker, others are included in General PCF

^ Expanded items from General PCF



### 1.1 Emphasize Humanity

- Honour peoples' autonomy, including persons in recovery from mental illness (PIR) and their care partners^
- Respect for the inherent worth, uniqueness and dignity of human beings, including PIR and their care partners^
- Embrace diversity
- Believe in people's potential to change, including PIR in different life developmental stage and in different stage of the course of mental illness^
- Integrate the concepts of normalization and recovery into practice, and promote hope, choices and self-determination within medico-legal requirements and duty of care\*

### 1.2 Promote Justice

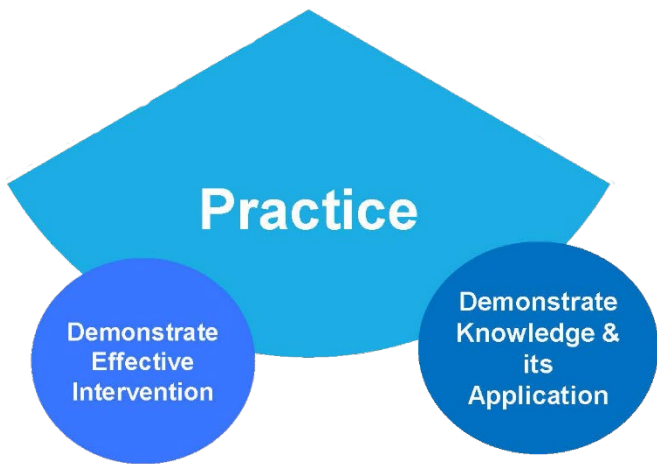
- Promote social justice, including for PIR and their care partners, equal right in personal data protection, access to personal information, choice of lifestyle, expression of views, social services, and voting and other political rights^
- Promote economic justice, including for PIR and their care partners, equal opportunity in employment, and equal citizen right in enjoying various financial support of the society^
- Promote environmental justice, including for PIR and their care partners, right to live in places where other people live, and enjoy environmental resources other people enjoy^
- Facilitate Social Inclusion and eradicate stigmatization and discrimination on PIR and their care partners^

### 1.3 Demonstrate Commitment

- Commit to enhance well-being of individuals and promote assets/abilities of PIR through different methods of social work practice, including the normalization and recovery principles for working with PIR^
- Commit to develop quality professional service, and addressing emerging service gap^
- Commit to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that promote social well-being
- Commit to improve well-being of the community, society and word^
- Commit to promote the importance of human relationships

### 1.4 Adhere to Professional Ethics

- Understand and comply with the social work professional code of ethics
- Make ethical decisions in the social work process^
- Uphold professional integrity



- Maintain professional independence in a multidisciplinary work setting for the best benefits of PIR and their care partners\*

## 2.1 Demonstrate Knowledge and its Application

- Use appropriate knowledge base for assessment. For working with PIR and their care partners, knowledge base includes but not limited to adequate understanding of mental health and illnesses in context, crisis management, comprehensive history taking, biopsychosocial case formulation, core physical treatments and psychosocial interventions, rehabilitation models, and mental health law^
- Understand and use of theories in the planning and intervention process, including PIR in different life developmental stage and in different stage of the course of mental illness^
- Apply specialized theories to help service users specific to certain practice settings, which include but not limited to psychiatric inpatient, outpatient and day hospital services, community mental health centres, vocational rehabilitation services, residential services, case management teams, and service users and care partners groups or organizations^
- Understand legal requirements implied in direct social work practice, in particular the mental health law of Hong Kong^
- Understand the availability of community resources
- Possess up-to-date professional knowledge, in particular, psychopathology, physical treatments, psychosocial interventions, recovery and rehabilitation, service models, and mental health law^
- Sustain understanding of socio-economic political conditions of the society
- Understand and apply knowledge of research
- Behave and perform in a professional manner, including in working with PIR, their care partners, and other health and social services' professionals, and in interacting with society at large^
- Work collaboratively in a multidisciplinary mental health team\*
- Promote safety and mitigate risk\*

## 2.2 Demonstrate Effective Intervention

- Sensitive to interpersonal dynamics in engaging with target service users effectively, including PIR and their care partners^
- Able to conduct assessment systematically and accurately and develop biopsychosocial case formulation^
- Demonstrate skills in advocacy



- Carry out knowledge-informed or evidence-based practice
- Offer indigenized practice to meet service users' specific and emerging needs
- Implement critical evaluation
- Always engage in reflective practice to advance professional performance
- Manage crisis and unprecedented incidents, including psychiatric emergency^
- Proficient at task, time, administrative and management
- Understand the application and limitation of information technology in mental health services^
- Maintain physical, psychological, and social health for provision of best service

### 3.1 Generate Societal Impact

- Build social capital for PIR in different life developmental stage and in different stage of the course of mental illness^
- Advocate for policy change and service development to meet emerging social needs and resolve social problems^
- Excel existing services and innovate on intervention development^
- Promote global values (e.g. equality, justice, human right, citizenship...) with cultural sensitivity to create a better world^
- Eradicate stigma on PIR and their care partners, and facilitate social inclusion\*

### 3.2 Exert Professional Impact

- Demonstrate professional expertise when participating in inter-disciplinary collaboration
- Expand new knowledge to advance professional practice
- Generate innovative practice to inspire all mental health practitioners^
- Conduct knowledge transfer
- Strengthen the multidisciplinary mental health team's understanding of the critical contextual issues in working with PIR and their care partners\*

Prepared in March, 2023  
To be reviewed in February, 2026