

Book Review

Bisman, C. (2014). *Social work: Value-guided practice for a global society*. New York: Columbia University Press.

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Cynthia Bisman, professor emerita of social work at Bryn Mawr College, has been the codirector of the Bryn Mawr College Center on International Studies and was associate editor (North America) for the journal *Ethics and Social Welfare*. She has authored/co-authored two previous books on social work practice, and she is the co-editor of a newly released book titled *Gender Justice and Development: Local and Global*.

Social work practice encompassing a global awareness is the focus of Bisman's *Social Work: Value-Guided Practice for a Global Society*. With the mobility and relocation of increasing numbers of people, advancements in technology that allow rapid communication around the globe, and large scale issues affecting people across multiple borders, globalization must be on the minds of social work practitioners and present in all aspects of what they do. Bisman's foundational practice book introduces students to the components of practice while updating these elements to embrace global consciousness.

The first several chapters of the book introduce three themes that are then revisited in the later chapters covering practice concepts. These three themes are: global consciousness, history, and values.

Bisman defines global consciousness as "a recognition of the world as a unity consisting of complex interactions among people across the globe" (p. 2). Global consciousness in social work is not about traveling to other parts of the world to prac-

tice; rather, it is about expanding and refining our views of the global society in which we live and work. This larger perspective is one that encompasses multiple cultures, nationalities, and meanings. In our rapidly changing environment, social workers need to be aware of the diverse populations and situations appearing in their practice. Also, social workers need to be keenly aware of global influences throughout the multiple levels of intervention. In later chapters, global perspectives are explored in relation to the specific practice components that are discussed.

Bisman explains the importance of history in laying the foundation for current and emerging practices, including greater attention to global considerations. In Chapter 2, she provides a historical background for the profession of social work, as well as establishes the development of two major concepts, the person-in-environment perspective and the biopsychosocial approach. In later chapters, she explores the history and developments of the practice components that are covered.

In Chapter 3, Bisman discusses the core values of the profession, utilizing a larger perspective by drawing on codes of ethics from the NASW, the International Federation of Social Workers, and the British Association of Social Workers. She also delves into several specific ethical standards, such as self-determination and duty to warn or protect, exploring their importance as well as the potential conflicts that can occur between them. Bisman notes that different meanings can be attributed to

ethical codes developed in various cultures. Conflicts can also arise in ethical considerations on a global scale, such as cultural relativism versus human rights. In later chapters, she ties the values to the practice components and shares ethical considerations for when utilizing those components.

In the remaining chapters, Bisman provides an overview of certain elements of social work practice. The main topics and some of the supporting material are shared here:

In Chapter 4, she covers assessments, presenting the steps of creating a case theory for a specific client in a specific situation. In this chapter, she also discusses the use of diagnoses, the biopsychosocial approach, the role of evidence-based practice, and specific tools for assessment, such as ecomaps and genograms.

Chapter 5 is concerned with relationships, which are integral to facilitating change. Here, Bisman covers boundaries, dual relationships, and the importance of both the social worker and the client believing in the client's capacity to change. She also covers considerations in starting and terminating relationships, as well as potential losses that can occur. These include personal and worker-client relationships and encompass perspectives of both clients and social workers (especially practicum students).

Chapter 6 deals with communication and the vital role it plays in the other elements of practice. Methods of communication, as well as their purposes, are covered, such as validation, confrontation, and the use of silence.

In Chapter 7, Bisman discusses the use of differential self, relying on reflection, reflexivity, and the profession's knowledge base to practice according to the needs of the client in a particular situation. In this chapter, guidelines for self-disclosure are provided, and the use of supervision is addressed.

In the final chapter, intervention is examined. The steps of intervention include defining the problem, setting goals, determining actions, and measuring outcomes. This chapter discusses the rise of evidence-based practice and considerations of how to best utilize it.

The strength of this text is its extensive use of case studies to illustrate the content. Numerous cases are offered for each concept, and the cases are revisited multiple times to demonstrate a number of concepts. The cases are typically offered with the social worker's reflection on the case (in her or his own words), and excerpts of dialogue between the social worker and client are frequently shared. Often, information on the social worker's background is provided to show the social worker's unique perspective, as well as potential challenges and biases to be considered. These case studies portray the many facets of social work practice in complex situations. They would be helpful for all social workers, but especially for students who are eager to see the profession in action and who are learning to translate social work concepts into real world practice.

This text would work well for a foundational course in a graduate program. It provides an introduction to basic elements of social work practice, yet shares a wealth of knowledge regarding each of them. It also contains exercises at the end of most chapters for students to explore and practice the content covered.