Setting the Stage

A Multidimensional Approach

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Key Ideas

Case Study: Manisha’s Quest for Dignity and Purpose
Social Work’s Purpose and Approach: Individual and Community Well-Being
A Multidimensional Approach
Personal Dimensions
Environmental Dimensions
Time Dimensions
Diversity, Inequality, and the Pursuit of Social Justice: A Global Perspective
Diversity
Inequality
Pursuit of Social Justice

Knowing and Doing

Knowing About the Case
Knowledge About the Self
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Scientific Knowledge:
Theory and Research
Theory
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Critical Use of Theory and Research

A Word of Caution
Implications for Social Work Practice
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Opening Questions

What is it about people, environments, and time that social workers need to understand?

Why is it important for social workers to understand the roles that diversity and inequality play in human behavior?

Key Ideas

As you read this chapter, take note of these central ideas:

1. This book provides a multidimensional way of thinking about human behavior in terms of changing configurations of persons and environments.
2. Although person, environment, and time are inseparable, we can focus on them separately by thinking about the relevant dimensions of each.

3. Relevant personal dimensions include the biological, the psychological, and the spiritual.

4. Nine dimensions of environment that have relevance for social work are the physical environment, culture, social structure and social institutions, formal organizations, communities, social movements, small groups, families, and dyads. These dimensions have been studied separately, but they are neither mutually exclusive nor hierarchically ordered.

5. Social work puts special emphasis on diversity, inequality, and the pursuit of global social justice.

6. Knowledge about the case, knowledge about the self, values and ethics, and scientific knowledge are four important ingredients for moving from knowing to doing.

7. This book draws on two interrelated logical and systematic ways of building scientific knowledge: theory and empirical research.

**CASE STUDY**

**Manisha’s Quest for Dignity and Purpose**

Manisha is a 57-year-old Bhutanese woman who resettled in the United States in early 2009. She is eager to tell her story, which she does with the help of an interpreter. Manisha describes her childhood as wonderful. She was the youngest of seven children born to a farming family in a rural village of Bhutan. Although there was little support for education in her community, especially for girls, Manisha’s parents valued education, and she was one of five girls in her village school, where she was able to finish the second grade. As was tradition, she married young, at age 17, and became a homemaker for her husband, a contractor, and the four sons they later had. Manisha and her husband had a large plot of farmland and built a good life. They were able to develop some wealth and were sending their children to school. She says that they were managing well and living in peace.

In 1988, the political climate began to change and the good times ended. Manisha says she doesn’t really understand how the problem started, because in Bhutan women were excluded from decision making and were given little information. As she talks, she begins to reflect that she has learned some things about what happened, but she still doesn’t understand it. What she does recall is that the Bhutanese government began to discriminate against the Nepali ethnic group to which she belongs. News accounts indicate that the Druk Buddhist majority wanted to unite Bhutan under the Druk culture, religion, and language. The Nepalis had a separate culture and language and were mostly Hindu, while the Druks were Buddhist. Manisha says she does not know much about this, but she does recall that suddenly Nepalis were denied citizenship, were not allowed to speak their language, and could no longer get access to jobs. Within a family, different family members could be classified in different ways based on ethnicity.
Manisha recalls a woman who committed suicide as the discrimination grew worse. She also remembers that the Nepali people began to raise their voices and question what was happening. When this occurred, the Bhutanese government began to send soldiers to intimidate the villagers and undermine the Nepali resistance. It is evident that Manisha is controlling her emotions as she tells about cases of rape of Nepali women at the hands of the Bhutanese soldiers and recalls that the soldiers expected Nepali girls and women to be made available to them for sexual activity. She reports that government forces targeted Nepali families who had property and wealth, arresting them in the middle of the night and torturing and killing some. Families were forcefully evicted from their property. She recalls families who had to flee at night, sometimes leaving food on their tables.

One day when Manisha was at the market, the soldiers arrested her husband and took him to jail; she didn't know where he was for 2 days. He was in jail for 18 months. She remembers that she and her sons would hide out, carefully watch for soldiers, and sneak back home to cook. She was afraid to be at home. Finally, one day she was forced to report to the government office, and there she was told to leave and go to Nepal. She says that until then, she was just a simple housewife who was tending her gardens and cooking for her family. She told the government representative that she couldn't leave because her husband was in jail and she needed to care for her children. She tried to survive, living with other families, and she managed to live that way for a year.

Finally, Manisha heard that her husband would be released from jail on the condition that he leave the country. By this time, neighbors had started to flee, and only four households were left in her village. She sent her youngest son with friends and neighbors who were fleeing. A few days later, her husband was released. He said he was too afraid to stay in their home, and they too had to flee. Manisha did not want to leave, and as she tells her story, she still talks longingly of the property they had to leave behind. But the next morning, she and her husband and their other three sons fled the country. It was a 3-day walk to the Indian border, where the family joined the youngest son. Manisha and her family then lived on the banks of a river with other Nepalis who had fled. Her sons ranged in age from 6 to 19 at this time. Manisha recalls that many people died by the river and that there was “fever all around.”

After 3 months, Manisha and her family were moved to a refugee camp in Nepal, the largest of seven Nepali refugee camps. They spent 17 years in the refugee camp before coming to the United States. The 18 months of imprisonment affected her husband such that he was not able to tolerate the close quarters of refugee camp living; he lived and worked in the adjacent Nepali community and came to visit his family. The four boys were able to attend school in the camp.

The camp was managed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), whose representatives started to build a forum for women. Manisha says that many of the women were, like her, from rural areas where they had been self-reliant, eating what they grew and taking care of their families. Now they were dependent on other people. The facilities at the camps were closely built and crowded. There was always a need for cash; the refugees were given food, but money was needed for other things, like clothes and personal hygiene items. Oxfam, an international aid organization, started a knitting program and the women were able to sell their knitted items, which provided much-needed cash. Manisha recalls that many of the women were emotionally disturbed and needed support. Some committed suicide. She began to provide moral support to other women and to disabled children, and she worked as the camp’s Deputy Secretary for 3 years.

*(Continued)*
SOCIAL WORK’S PURPOSE AND APPROACH: INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

As eventful as it has been, Manisha’s story is still unfolding. As a social worker, you will become a part of many unfolding life stories, and you will want to have useful ways to think about those stories and effective ways to be helpful to people like Manisha and her community of Bhutanese refugees. The purpose of this book is to provide ways for you to think about the nature and complexities of the people and situations that are at the center of social work practice. To begin to do that, we must first clarify the purpose of social work and the approach it takes to individual and collective human behavior. This is laid out in the 2008 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE):

The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person and environment construct, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, social work’s purpose is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons. (p. 1)

As noted in the preface, Section 2.1.7 of the policy lays out the guidelines for the human behavior and the social environment curriculum.

Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts.
to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development. (p. 6)

The first nine chapters of this book elaborate and update the person and environment construct that has guided social work intervention since the earliest days of the profession. The element of time is added to the person and environment construct to call attention to the dynamic nature of both people and environments. In the first nine chapters, the contributing authors and I identify multiple dimensions of both person and environment and draw on ongoing scientific inquiry, both conceptual and empirical, to examine the dynamic understanding of each dimension. Special attention is paid to globalization, diversity, human rights, and social and economic justice in examination of each dimension. The last seven chapters of the book (Chapters 10–16) have the specific purpose of presenting multidimensional understanding of human behavior across the life course, as mandated in Section 2.1.7.

In this chapter, the multidimensional approach to person and environment is presented, followed by a discussion of diversity, inequality, and the pursuit of social justice from a global perspective. After a brief description of the process by which professionals like social workers move from knowing to doing, the chapter ends with a discussion of how scientific knowledge from theory and research informs social work’s multidimensional understanding of human behavior.

**A MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH**

If we focus on the *person* in Manisha’s story, it appears that she was born with a healthy biological constitution that allowed her to work on the family farms and nurture four sons. She describes no difficulty in managing the strenuous 3-day walk to the Indian border as she fled Bhutan. She survived while many people died by the river, and later, in the refugee camp, she survived and found new purpose when many others died of damaged bodies or broken spirits. We might wonder whether these hardships have taken their toll on her biological systems in ways that will show up later as health problems. We can wonder the same about the harsh conditions of her husband’s 18-month imprisonment. Manisha appears to have emotional resilience, but she is struggling to maintain belief in her ability to find dignity and purpose in her new life in the United States. Her Hindu faith continues to be a source of comfort for her as she strives to maintain hope for the future.

If we focus on the *environment*, we see many influences on Manisha’s story. Consider first the physical environment. Manisha lived in relative comfort, first on her father’s and then on her husband’s farm for almost 40 years, where she was able to spend much of her day outside, helping to turn farmland into food for her family. She still grieves the loss of land and the freedom she had to roam it. From there, she endured a long hike and a few months of survival in a poorly sheltered camp by the river. Her next stop was a crowded refugee camp where she faced a level of dependence she had not previously known. After 17 years, she left the camp with her family to establish a new life in the United States where she lives in a small apartment that leaves her feeling isolated.

Culture is an aspect of environment that exerts a powerful influence in Manisha’s story. Culture influenced the fact that she received limited, if any, education and that she was married at what may appear to us to be an early age. Her culture also held that women should not have power and influence and are not to be involved in affairs outside the home, and yet Manisha assumed a powerful role in holding her family together after her husband was imprisoned. She also developed a very public role in the refugee camp and grieves the loss of that role in which she felt she was making a contribution to the public good. Although there were many challenges in the camp, she was living among people who shared her culture, language, and religion. She is struggling to adapt to a new, fast-moving
culture where language is a constant barrier and her religious beliefs are in the minority. But culture is an important part of Manisha’s story in another way. Culture clash and cultural imperialism led the Bhutanese government to discriminate against and then banish the Nepali ethnic group. Unfortunately, such cultural conflict is a source of great international upheaval.

Manisha’s story has been powerfully influenced by the geopolitical unrest that began just as she was entering middle adulthood. Her relationships with social institutions have changed over time, and she has had to learn new rules based on her changing place in the social structure. Prior to 1988, she enjoyed high status in her village and the respect that comes with it. She lived in peace. She still does not understand why the Bhutanese government suddenly began to discriminate against her ethnic group, and she grieves the loss of property, status, and homeland that came out of this unrest. She is grateful to the United Nations for their support of the Bhutanese refugees and to the United States for welcoming some to resettle there. Unfortunately, she and her family resettled in the United States in the midst of the worst global economic recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s. They are all struggling to find work that will allow them to have some of the self-reliance they experienced in Bhutan.

Organizations and communities have been important forces in Manisha’s life, but she has had little direct contact with social movements. Several organizations have been helpful to her and her family since they fled Bhutan. First, she is grateful to the UNHCR for all of the resources that they put into running the Nepali refugee camps. Second, she has high praise for Oxfam International that started the knitting program in the camps. In the United States, she is grateful for the assistance of the refugee resettlement program that sponsored her family, and is especially appreciative of the ESL program they run and the moral support provided by the social worker. She would like to have more contact with the Hindu Center, but the distance does not make that easy.

Manisha moved from a farming community, where she was surrounded by open land, extended family, and long-term friends, to a poorly sheltered camp by the river, where fear and confusion were the driving force of relationships and loss of loved ones was a much too common occurrence. Next, she moved to a crowded refugee camp, where disease and despair were common, but where she also found her voice and played an important role in helping other women and their children. She enjoyed her leadership position as Deputy Secretary of the camp and enjoyed the active life she created in this role. Now, she has moved to a city in the United States where many people are willing to help, but everything seems strange, and the language barrier is a serious impediment. She feels isolated and lonely in her small apartment.

Manisha is aware that some members of her Nepali ethnic group developed a resistance movement when the Bhutanese government began to discriminate against them. She is also aware that some refugees in the Nepali refugee camps have resisted the idea of resettlement to the United States and other countries because they think that resettlement will dilute the pressure on Bhutan to repatriate the Nepalis. As much as Manisha would love to be repatriated, she and her family decided that resettlement in the United States was their best chance for a good future.

Some small groups have been important to Manisha’s adjustment to changing circumstances. In the refugee camp, she participated in some focus groups that the UNHCR conducted with the women in the camps. She is enjoying the relationships she is developing with her ESL class; she draws courage from the companionship and the collegial sense of “we are all in the same boat” that she gets from the weekly classes.

Family is paramount to Manisha. She is lucky to have her husband living with her again and all of her children nearby. None of her siblings was resettled in the same city, however, and they are spread across several countries at this time. Some are still in the Nepali camp awaiting resettlement. She is not even sure what has happened to much of her large extended family. Manisha’s children and grandchildren are central to her life, and they give her hope for the future. Manisha and her husband
are devoted to each other, but must adjust to living together again after living in separate quarters for many years. In some ways, Manisha led a much more independent life in the refugee camp than back in Bhutan, and she came to value that independence. She and her husband are still negotiating this change from traditional gender roles. Her husband has enormous sadness about all that the family lost after the situation changed for them in Bhutan, including the loss of social status and self-reliance.

*Time* is also an important part of Manisha's story, and there are many trace effects of earlier times in her current story. She thinks of her 40 years in Bhutan as a time that moved by too fast, but left her with many happy memories that she now cherishes. The 17 years in the refugee camp seemed to move very slowly at first, but Manisha was able to develop a rhythm to her life that kept time moving. These were also years when Manisha and her husband lived in separate quarters, and their relationship still suffers from having had such a long period of partial separation. Experiences with past environments have left them with a preference for rural environments and a discomfort with too much privacy, which they experience as isolation. Discrimination, imprisonment, escape, crowded camp conditions, and resettlement have been powerful life events for Manisha and her family and continue to affect their current life. Most notably, Manisha's husband is uncomfortable in situations involving confinement, food shortage, or harsh authority figures, which appears to be related to the 18 months he spent in jail, an experience he does not talk about, not even with Manisha. Both Manisha and her husband still grieve the loss of their farm and long to see it again. They also long for a time of life that was much simpler, living with their children on their farm with family and friends all around. The language barrier where they now live is the most persistent reminder that this is not home, but it takes on special meaning because it reminds them of the time when the Bhutanese government prohibited the use of the Nepali language in schools. Manisha sees that her children and grandchildren are living in the present rather than the past, and she is trying to do that as well.

Manisha's story is a good illustration of the dynamic nature of the person and environment over time. In addition, it illustrates why the person and environment must be put within the context of time. What made Manisha decide to take an active role in providing support and comfort to other women in the refugee camp? Was it something within her, something about her physical and social environment, or something about her life course phase? Or a combination of all three? What will her life be like in 10 years? How about the lives of her husband, her children, and her grandchildren? What factors will influence their futures? How will they look back on this time in their lives? It is impossible to focus on person, environment, and time independently; they are inseparable.

As suggested above, social work has historically recognized human behavior as an interaction of person with environment. The earliest social work practice book, *Social Diagnosis*, written by Mary Richmond in 1917, identified the social situation and the personality of the client as the dual foci of social work assessment. The settlement house movement put heavy emphasis on the environmental elements of person–environment interactions, but environment was deemphasized, and intrapsychic factors were emphasized when social work began to rely on psychodynamic theory in the 1920s. In the late 1960s, however, social work scholars began to focus on the environment again when general systems theory and other related formulations were incorporated into the way social work scholars think about human behavior (R. E. Anderson & Carter, 1974; M. Bloom, 1984; Germain, 1973; Hartman, 1970; G. Hearn, 1958, 1969; C. Meyer, 1976; Pincus & Minahan, 1973; Siporin, 1975).

In recent times, ecological theory, which addresses the relationships between organisms and their environments, has become the dominant theoretical approach across a number of behavioral science disciplines (Gardiner & Kosmitzki, 2008). These approaches have renewed social workers' interest in the social sciences and helped them to understand the processes and activities involved in
the relationships between person and environment. The multidimensional approach of this book is rooted in the systems perspective.

Today, a vast multidisciplinary literature, of both theory and research, is available to help us in our social work efforts. The good news is that the multifaceted nature of this literature provides a broad knowledge base for the varied settings and roles involved in social work practice. The bad news is that this literature is highly fragmented, “scattered across more than thirty fields” (Kirk & Reid, 2002, p. 207). What we need is a structure for organizing our thinking about this multifaceted, multidisciplinary, fragmented literature.

The multidimensional approach provided in this book should help. This approach is built on the three major elements of human behavior: person, environment, and time. Although we focus on each of these elements separately, keep in mind that no single element can be entirely understood without attention to the other elements. Person, environment, and time are not simple concepts, and they can best be thought of as multidimensional, that is, as having several identifiable dimensions. We can get a clearer picture of these three elements if we think about the important dimensions of each—about what it is that we should study about person, about environment, and about time. Exhibit 1.1 is a graphic overview of the dimensions of person, environment, and time discussed in this book. Exhibit 1.2 defines and gives examples for each dimension.

Keep in mind that dimension refers to a feature that can be focused on separately but that cannot be understood without also considering other features. The dimensions identified in this book are usually studied as detached or semidetached realities, with one dimension characterized as causing or leading to another. However, I do not see dimensions as detached realities, and I am not presenting a causal model here. I want instead to show how these dimensions work together, how they are embedded with each other, and how many possibilities are opened for social work practice when we think about human behavior this way. I am suggesting that humans engage in

**Exhibit 1.1** Person, Environment, and Time Dimensions

![Exhibit 1.1 Person, Environment, and Time Dimensions](image-url)
### Exhibit 1.2 Definitions and Examples of Dimensions of Person, Environment, and Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Dimensions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Biological Person</td>
<td>The body’s biochemical, cell, organ, and physiological systems</td>
<td>Nervous system, endocrine system, immune system, cardiovascular system, musculoskeletal system, reproductive system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Psychological Person</td>
<td>The mind and the mental processes</td>
<td>Cognitions (conscious thinking processes), emotion (feelings), self (identity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spiritual Person</td>
<td>The aspect of the person that searches for meaning and purpose in life</td>
<td>Themes of morality; ethics; justice; interconnectedness; creativity; mystical states; prayer, meditation, and contemplation; relationships with a higher power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental Dimensions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Physical Environment</td>
<td>The natural and human-built material aspects of the environment</td>
<td>Water, sun, trees, buildings, landscapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>A set of common understandings, evident in both behavior and material artifacts</td>
<td>Beliefs, customs, traditions, values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Structure and Social</td>
<td>Social structure: A set of interrelated social institutions developed by</td>
<td>Social structure: social class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>humans to impose constraints on human interaction for the purpose of the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>survival and well-being of the collectivity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social institutions: Patterned ways of organizing social relations in a</td>
<td>Social institutions: government, economy, education, health care, social welfare, religion, mass media, and family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>particular sector of social life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Organizations</td>
<td>Collectivities of people, with a high degree of formality of structure,</td>
<td>Civic and social service organizations, business organizations, professional associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>working together to meet a goal or goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities</td>
<td>People bound either by geography or by network links (webs of</td>
<td>Territorial communities such as neighborhoods; relational communities such as the social work community, the disability community, a faith community, a soccer league</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>communication), sharing common ties, and interacting with one another</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Movements</td>
<td>Large-scale collective actions to make change, or resist change, in</td>
<td>Civil rights movement, poor people’s movement, disability movement, gay rights movement</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
multidetermined behavior, that is, behavior that develops as a result of many causes. I do think, however, that focusing on specific dimensions one at a time can help to clarify general, abstract statements about person and environment—that is, it can put some flesh on the bones of this idea.

**Personal Dimensions**

Any story could be told from the perspective of any person in the story. The story at the beginning of this chapter is told from Manisha’s perspective, but it could have been told from the perspective of a variety of other persons such as the Bhutanese king, Manisha’s husband, one of her children, one of her grandchildren, a UNHCR staff member, one of the women supported by Manisha in the camp, the social worker at the refugee resettlement agency, or Manisha’s ESL teacher. You will want to recognize the multiple perspectives held by different persons involved in the stories of which you become a part in your social work activities.

You also will want tools for thinking about the various dimensions of the persons involved in these stories. For many years, social work scholars described the approach of social work as psychosocial, giving primacy to psychological dimensions of the person. Personality, ego states, emotion, and cognition are the important features of the person in this approach. Currently, however, social workers, like contemporary scholars in other disciplines (e.g., Bandura, 2001; E. Garland & Howard, 2009; C. MacDonald & Mikes-Liu, 2009; Sadock & Sadock, 2007; P. White, 2005), take a biopsychosocial approach. In this approach, human behavior is considered to be the result of interactions of integrated biological, psychological, and social systems. Psychology is seen as inseparable from biology; emotions and cognitions affect the health of the body and are affected by it (Adelman, 2006).

### Exhibit 1.2 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Groups</td>
<td>Collections of people who interact with each other, perceive themselves as belonging to a group, are interdependent, join together to accomplish a goal, fulfill a need through joint association, or are influenced by a set of rules and norms</td>
<td>Friendship group, self-help group, therapy group, committee, task group, interdisciplinary team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>A social group of two or more persons, characterized by ongoing interdependence with long-term commitments that stem from blood, law, or affection</td>
<td>Nuclear family, extended family, chosen family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyads</td>
<td>Two persons bound together in some way</td>
<td>Parent and child, romantic couple, social worker and client</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Dimensions</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clock Time</td>
<td>Time in terms of clocks and calendars</td>
<td>Hours, days, workdays, weekends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Time</td>
<td>Time in terms of signals from the body and from nature</td>
<td>Hunger signals time to eat; natural signs signal time to plant and harvest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear Time</td>
<td>Time in terms of a straight line</td>
<td>Past, present, future</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Increasingly, neurobiologists write about the “social brain,” recognizing that the human brain is wired for social life, but also that the social environment has an impact on brain structure and processes (Cacioppo et al., 2007; Frith & Frith, 2010).

In recent years, social work scholars as well as scholars in the social and behavioral sciences and medicine have also argued for greater attention to the spiritual dimension of persons (Carley, 2005; Faull & Hills, 2006; Richards, 2005; Watts, Dutton, & Gulliford, 2006). Developments in neuroscience have generated new explorations of the unity of the biological, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of the person. For example, recent research has focused on the ways that emotions and thoughts, as well as spiritual states, influence the immune system (Kimura et al., 2005; Woods, Antoni, Ironson, & Kling, 1999) and health practices (C. Park, Edmondson, Hale-Smith, & Blank, 2009). One research team has explored the impact of spirituality and religiosity on mental health and found that thankfulness protects against major depression (Kendler et al., 2003). In this book, we give substantial coverage to all three of these personal dimensions: biological, psychological, and spiritual.

Environmental Dimensions

Social workers have always thought of the environment as multidimensional. As early as 1901, Mary Richmond presented a model of case coordination that took into account not only personal dimensions but also family, neighborhood, civic organizations, private charitable organizations, and public relief organizations (see Exhibit 1.3). Like contemporary social workers, Richmond saw the environment as multidimensional, including in her model many of the same dimensions of environment covered in this book and presented in Exhibit 1.1.

Several models for classifying dimensions of the environment have been proposed since Mary Richmond’s time. Among social work scholars, Ralph Anderson and Irl Carter made a historic contribution to systemic thinking about human behavior with the first edition of their Human Behavior in the Social Environment: A Social Systems Approach (1974), one of the earliest textbooks on human behavior authored by social workers. Their classification of environmental dimensions has had a significant impact on the way social workers think about the environment. Anderson and Carter divided the environment into five dimensions: culture and society, communities, organizations, groups, and families.

Social workers (see, e.g., Ashford, LeCroy, & Lortie, 2010) have also been influenced by Uri Bronfenbrenner’s (1989, 1999) ecological perspective, which identifies four interdependent, nested categories or levels of systems:

1. **Microsystems** are systems that involve direct, face-to-face contact between members.

2. **Mesosystems** are networks of microsystems of a given person.

3. **Exosystems** are the linkages between microsystems and larger institutions that affect the system, such as the family system and the parent’s workplace or the family system and the child’s school.

4. ** Macrosystems** are the broader influences of culture, subculture, and social structure.

Some recent models have added the physical environment (natural and designed environments) as a separate dimension. Failure to include the physical environment has most notably hampered social work’s ability to respond to persons with physical disabilities. Recent research on the connection between the physical environment and healing has special relevance for social workers in many settings.

To have an up-to-date understanding of the multidimensional environment, social workers need knowledge about the eight dimensions of environment described in Exhibit 1.2 and discussed in Chapters 6–9 in this book: the physical environment, culture, social structure and social institutions, formal organizations, communities, social movements, small groups, and families.
Exhibit 1.3  Mary Richmond’s 1901 Model of Case Coordination

A. Family Forces
   Capacity of each member for
   Affection
   Training
   Endeavor
   Social development

B. Personal Forces
   Kindred
   Friends

C. Neighborhood Forces
   Neighbors, landlords, tradesmen
   Former and present employers
   Clergymen, Sunday-school teachers, fellow church members
   Doctors
   Trade unions, fraternal and benefit societies, social clubs, fellow workmen
   Libraries, educational clubs, classes, settlements, etc.
   Thrift agencies, saving banks, stamp-savings, building and loan associations

D. Civic Forces
   School teachers, truant officers
   Police, police magistrates, probation officers, reformatories
   Health department, sanitary inspectors, factory inspectors
   Postmen
   Parks, baths, etc.

E. Private Charitable Forces
   Charity organization society
   Church of denomination to which family belongs
   Benevolent individuals
   National, special, and general relief societies
   Charitable employment agencies and workrooms
   Fresh-air society, children’s aid society, society for protection of children, children’s homes, etc.
   District nurses, sick-client kitchens, dispensaries, hospitals, etc.
   Society for suppression of vice, prisoner’s aid society, etc.

F. Public Relief Forces
   Almshouses
   Outdoor poor department
   Public hospitals and dispensaries
We also need knowledge about dyadic relationships—relationships between two people, the most basic social relationships. Dyadic relationships receive attention throughout the book and are emphasized in Chapter 4 in discussion of the self in relationships. Simultaneous consideration of multiple environmental dimensions provides new possibilities for action, perhaps even new or revised approaches to social work practice.

These dimensions are neither mutually exclusive nor hierarchically ordered. For example, a family is sometimes referred to as a social institution, families can also be considered small groups or dyads, and family theorists write about family culture. Remember, dimensions are useful ways of thinking about person–environment configurations, but you should not think of them as detached realities.

**Time Dimensions**

When I was a doctoral student in a social work practice course, Professor Max Siporin began his discussion about social work assessment with the comment, “The date is the most important information on a written social work assessment.” This was Siporin’s way of acknowledging the importance of time in human behavior, of recognizing that person–environment transactions are ever-changing, dynamic, and flowing.

We are aware of the time dimension in the ongoing process of migration in Manisha’s story. And, you may be interested, as I am, in the process of acculturation in which she and her family are now engaged. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, **acculturation** is a process of changing one’s culture by incorporating elements of another culture. When the Bhutanese government tried to impose a different culture, religion, and language on the Nepali ethnic group, they, not surprisingly, resisted. In the refugee camps, their culture, religion, and language were practiced without conflict. Now that they have resettled in the United States, they must find a way to live in a multicultural society that is nevertheless dominated by Anglo culture, Christianity, and the English language. Think about the complexity of the developmental tasks involved in adapting to that culture change.

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**Photo 1.1** Three elements of human behavior are captured in this photo—person, environment, and time.
Acculturation happens over time, in a non-linear process, with new situations and opportunities to learn, negotiate, and accommodate. Manisha recognizes that her development of English proficiency skills depends to a large degree on opportunities to be in situations where she must use those skills and observe other people using the English language. She is interested in learning about her new culture’s roles while still keeping her culture of origin. No doubt she will become bicultural over time, given her adaptability in developing new gender roles in the refugee camp. Most likely, the different members of her family will acculturate at different paces, with her grandchildren leading the way (Bush, Bohon, & Kim, 2010). Twenty years ago, research indicated that men adapted to cultural change faster than women, but more recent research indicates that immigrant women often have a faster pace of acculturation than their spouses (Falicov, 2003).

When I think of time, I tend to think of clocks, calendars, and appointments. Moreover, I often seem to be racing against time, allowing the clock to tell me when an event should begin and end. This is the way most people in affluent countries with market economies think of time. This approach to time has been called clock time (Lauer, 1981; R. Levine, 2006). However, this approach to time is a relatively new invention, and many people in the contemporary world have a very different approach (Rosen, 2004). In nonindustrialized countries, and in subcultures within industrialized countries, people operate on event time, allowing scheduling to be determined by events. Robert Levine (2006) provides numerous examples of event time. Signals from the body, rather than the hour on the clock, dictate when to eat. Activities are guided by seasonal changes; when the rainy season comes, it is time for planting. Appointments are flexible: “I will see you tomorrow morning when the cows go out to graze.” The length of an event may be explained by saying, for example, “The storm lasted as long as a rice-cooking.” Monks in Burma have developed their own alarm clocks, knowing it is time to get up when there is enough light to see the veins in their hands (Thompson, 1967, cited in R. Levine, 2006). In agricultural societies, the most successful farmers are the ones who can be responsive to natural events rather than to scheduled events. Manisha’s life was organized around cues from the natural world rather than the clock when she lived in Bhutan, just as my grandfather’s was on his farm in rural Tennessee.

Anthropologists report that some event time cultures, such as that of the Hopi of the U.S. Southwest and some Arab cultures, have no language to distinguish past, present, and future time. However, clock time cultures often use the concept of time orientation to describe the extent to which individuals and collectivities are invested...
in three temporal zones—past, present, and future time—known as **linear time**. Research indicates that cultures differ in their time orientation. Traditional cultures are more invested in the past, and advanced industrial cultures are more invested in the future (Hofstede, 1998). In reality, some situations call for us to be totally immersed in the present, others call for historical understanding of the past and its impact on the present, and still others call for attention to future consequences and possibilities. Recently, Western behavioral scientists have begun to incorporate Eastern mindfulness practices of being more fully present in the current moment (present orientation) to help people buffer the persistent stresses of clock time and goal monitoring (future orientation) (see, e.g., Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). People in fast-paced clock time societies often berate those who are less attentive to the clock while at the same time bemoaning the hold the clock has on them. Research also indicates that there are age-related differences in time orientation, with older adults being more past oriented than younger age groups (Shmotkin, 1991). There are also individual variations in time orientation. For example, researchers have found that trauma survivors who experienced the most severe loss are more likely than other trauma survivors to be highly oriented to the past (Holman & Silver, 1998; E. Martz, 2004). This is something to keep in mind when we interact with refugees, military men and women who have served in war zones, and other groups who have an increased likelihood of having a history of trauma. It is also important for social workers to be aware of the meaning of time for the individuals and communities they serve.

Sometimes the pace of change is more rapid than at other times—for example, the pace of change accelerated in 1988 for Manisha and her family and again when they resettled in the United States. There is also a temporal scope, or duration, to social and personal change. In linear time, the scope of some events is brief, such as a birthday party, an automobile accident, termination from a job, winning the lottery, or a natural disaster. Werner, Altman, and Oxley (1985) refer to these brief events as **incidents**; in this book, they are called **life events**. Although life events are brief in scope, they may produce shifts and have serious and long-lasting effects. It is important to note the role of perception when discussing both the pace of change and the duration of an event (Rappaport, Enrich, & Wilson, 1985). It is easy to imagine that the 3 months that Manisha and her family spent in the camp by the river seemed longer than 3 months in a more peaceful time on their farm in Bhutan.

Other events are long and complex transactions of people and environments. Werner et al. (1985) refer to these longer events as **stages**; it is this dimension of time that has been incorporated into life stage theories of human behavior. As will be explained in Chapter 2, however, life stage theories have been criticized for their overstatement of the universality of the sequence of stages and of the timing of human behavior. In contrast, a **life course perspective** assumes that each person's life has a unique long-term pattern of stability and change, but that shared social and historical contexts produce a number of commonalities. In some ways, Manisha's life journey is unique, but in other ways, her journey is similar to that of other members of the Nepali ethnic group from Bhutan. The life course perspective is the framework used in Part III of this book to discuss phases of human life.

**Critical Thinking Questions 1.1**

How would our understanding of Manisha's story change if we had no knowledge of her prior life experiences in Bhutan and the Nepali refugee camp—if we only assessed her based on her current functioning? What person and environment dimensions would we note in her current functioning?

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**DIVERSITY, INEQUALITY, AND THE PURSUIT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

The Council on Social Work Education requires that social work educational programs provide a global perspective to their students. What exactly does...
that mean, and why is it valued? We are increasingly aware that we are part of an interconnected world, and Manisha’s story is one reminder of this. But just how connected are we? In her book Beyond Borders: Thinking Critically about Global Issues, Paula Rothenberg (2006) writes, “A not so funny, but perhaps sadly true, joke going around claims that people in the United States learn geography by going to war” (p. xv). Certainly, we in the United States have learned something about the maps of Afghanistan and Iraq, but what do we know about the map of Bhutan? A global perspective involves much more than geography, however. Here are some aspects of what it means to take a global perspective:

- To be aware that my view of the world is not universally shared, and that others may have a view of the world that is profoundly different from mine
- To have a growing awareness of the diversity of ideas and cultural practices found in human societies around the world
- To be curious about conditions in other parts of the world and how they relate to conditions in our own society
- To understand where I fit in global social institutions and social structure
- To have a growing awareness of how people in other societies view my society
- To have a growing understanding of how the world works, with special attention paid to systems and mechanisms of inequality and oppression around the world

We have always been connected to other peoples of the world, but those connections are being intensified by the process of globalization, a process by which the world’s peoples are becoming more interconnected economically, politically, environmentally, and culturally. This increasing connectedness is, of course, aided by rapid advancements in communication technology. There is much debate about whether globalization is a good thing or a bad thing, a conversation that will be picked up in Chapter 7 as we consider the globalization of social institutions. What is important to note here is that globalization is increasing our experiences with social diversity and raising new questions about inequality, human rights, and social justice.

**Diversity**

Diversity has always been a part of the social reality in the United States. Even before the Europeans came, the Indigenous people were divided into about 200 distinct societies with about 200 different languages (Parrillo, 2009). Since the inception of the nation of the United States of America, we have been a nation of immigrants. We value our nation’s immigrant heritage and take pride in the ideals of equality of opportunity for all who come. However, there have always been tensions about how we as a nation will handle diversity. Will we be a *melting pot* where all are melted into one indistinguishable model of citizenship, or will we be a *pluralist society* in which groups have separate identities, cultures, and ways of organizing but work together in mutual respect? Pioneer social worker Jane Addams was a prominent voice for pluralism during the early 20th century, and that stance is consistent with social work’s concern for human rights.

However, it is accurate to say that some of the diversity in our national social life is new. Clearly, there is increasing racial, ethnic, and religious diversity in the United States, and the mix in the population stream has become much more complex in recent years (Parrillo, 2009). The United States was 87% White in 1925, it was 80% White in 1950, and was 72% White in 2000; by 2050, it is projected that we will be about 50% White (Prewitt, 2000). Why is this happening at this time? A major driving force is the demographic reality that native-born people are no longer reproducing at a replacement level in the wealthy postindustrial nations, which, if it continues, ultimately will lead to a declining population skewed toward advanced age. One solution used by some countries, including the United States, is to change immigration policy to allow new streams of immigration. The current number of foreign-born persons in the United States is lower than it has been throughout most of the past 150 years, but foreign-born persons are less
likely to be White than when immigration policy, prior to 1965, strictly limited entry to persons of color. With the recent influx of immigrants from around the globe, the United States has become one of many ethnically and racially diverse nations in the world today. In many wealthy postindustrial countries, including the United States, there is much anti-immigrant sentiment, even though the economies of these countries are dependent on such migration. Waves of immigration have usually been accompanied by anti-immigrant sentiment. There appear to be many reasons for this, including fear that new immigrants will dilute the “purity” of the native culture, racial and religious bias, and fear of economic competition. Like other diverse societies, we must find ways to embrace the diversity and seize the opportunity to demonstrate the human capacity for intergroup harmony.

On the other hand, some of the diversity in our social life is not new but simply newly recognized. In the contemporary era, we have been developing a heightened consciousness of human differences—gender differences, racial and ethnic differences, cultural differences, religious differences, differences in sexual orientation, differences in abilities and disabilities, differences in family forms, and so on. We are experiencing a new tension in navigating the line between cultural sensitivity and stereotypical thinking about individuals and groups. It is the intent of this book to capture the diversity of human experience in a manner that is respectful of all groups, conveys the positive value of human diversity, and recognizes differences within groups as well as differences among groups.

As you seek to honor differences, keep in mind the distinction between heterogeneity and diversity (Calasanti, 1996). Heterogeneity refers to individual-level variations—differences among individuals. For example, as the social worker whom Manisha consults, you will want to recognize the ways in which she is different from you and from other clients you serve, including other clients of Bhutanese heritage. An understanding of heterogeneity allows us to recognize the uniqueness of each person and situation. Diversity, on the other hand, refers to patterns of group differences. Diversity recognizes social groups—groups of people who share a range of physical, cultural, or social characteristics within a category of social identity. As a social worker, besides recognizing individual differences, you will also want to be aware of the diversity in your community, such as the distribution of various ethnic groups, including those of Bhutanese heritage. Knowledge of diversity helps us to provide culturally sensitive practice.

I want to interject a word here about terminology and human diversity. As the contributing authors and I attempted to uncover what is known about human diversity, we struggled with terminology to define identity groups. We searched for consistent language to describe different groups, and we were dedicated to using language that identity groups would use to describe themselves. However, we ran into challenges endemic to our time, related to the language of diversity. It is not the case that all members of a given identity group at any given time embrace the same terminology for their group. As I write this paragraph, I am listening to news reports about the political uproar over Senator Harry Reid’s use of the word Negro to refer to President Barack Obama. Yesterday, I heard a news report about the U.S. Census Bureau using Negro as a racial category in the 2010 census. Staff at the Census Bureau argued that this is the term preferred by older African Americans. However, the young African American reporter said the word is not in his vocabulary. Similar examples could be found for other ethnic groups. As we reviewed literature from different historical moments, we recognized the shifting nature of terminology. In addition, even within a given historical era, we found that different researchers used different terms and had different decision rules about who composes the membership of identity groups. Add to this the changing way that the U.S. Census Bureau establishes official categories of people, and in the end, we did not settle on fixed terminology to consistently describe identity groups. Rather, we use the language of individual researchers when reporting their work, because we want to avoid distorting their work. We hope you will not find
this too distracting. We also hope you will recognize that the ever-changing language of diversity has both constructive potential to find creative ways to affirm diversity and destructive potential to dichotomize diversity into the norm and the other.

Inequality

Attending to diversity involves recognition of the power relations between social groups and the patterns of opportunities and constraints for social groups. If we are interested in the Bhutanese community in our city, for example, we will want to note, among other things, the neighborhoods where they live, the quality of the housing stock in those neighborhoods, the comparative educational attainment in the community, the occupational profile of the community, and the comparative income levels. When we attend to diversity, we not only note the differences between groups, but we also note how socially constructed hierarchies of power are superimposed on these differences.

Recent U.S. scholarship in the social sciences has emphasized the ways in which three types of categorization—gender, race, and class—are used to develop hierarchical social structures that influence social identities and life chances (Rothenberg, 2007; Sernau, 2006). This literature suggests that these social categorizations create privilege, or unearned advantage, for some groups and disadvantage for other groups. In a much-cited article, Peggy McIntosh (2007, first printed in 1988) has pointed out the mundane daily advantages of White privilege that are not available to members of groups of color, such as, “can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race” and “Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability” (p. 179). We could also generate lists of advantages of male privilege, adult privilege, upper-middle-class privilege, heterosexual privilege, ability privilege, Christian privilege, and so on. McIntosh argues that members of privileged groups benefit from their privilege but have not been taught to think of themselves as privileged. They take for granted that their advantages are “normal and universal” (L. Bell, 1997, p. 12). For survival, members of nonprivileged groups must learn a lot about the lives of groups with privilege, but groups with privileged status are not similarly compelled to learn about the lives of members of nonprivileged groups.

Michael Schwalbe (2006) argues that those of us who live in the United States also carry “American privilege,” which comes from our dominant position in the world. (I would prefer to call this “U.S. privilege,” since people living in Canada, Ecuador, and Brazil also live in America.) According to Schwalbe, among other things, American privilege means that we don’t have to bother to learn about other countries or about the impact of our foreign policy on people living in those countries. Perhaps that is what Rothenberg (2006) was thinking of when she noted the ignorance of world geography among people living in the United States. American privilege also means that we have access to cheap goods that are produced by poorly paid workers in impoverished countries. As you will see in Chapter 7, the income and wealth gap between nations is mind-boggling. Sernau (2006) reports that the combined income of the 25 richest people in the United States is almost as great as the combined income of 2 billion of the world’s poorest people. The average per capita income in Bhutan is $1,440 in U.S. dollars, compared to $46,040 in the United States (UNICEF, n.d.). It is becoming increasingly difficult to deny the costs of exercising American privilege to remain ignorant about the rest of the world and the impact our actions have on other nations.

As the contributing authors and I strive to provide a global context, we encounter current controversies about appropriate language to describe different sectors of the world. Following World War II, a distinction was made among First World, Second World, and Third World nations, with First World referring to the Western capitalist nations, Second World referring to the countries belonging to the socialist bloc led by the Soviet Union, and Third World referring to a set of countries that were primarily former colonies of the First World.
More recently, many scholars have used this same language to define global sectors in a slightly different way. *First World* has been used to describe the nations that were the first to industrialize, urbanize, and modernize. *Second World* has been used to describe nations that have industrialized but have not yet become central to the world economy. *Third World* has been used to refer to nonindustrialized nations that have few resources and are considered expendable in the global economy. However, this approach has begun to lose favor in the past few years (Leeder, 2004). Immanuel Wallerstein (1974, 1979) uses different language but makes a similar distinction; he refers to wealthy core countries, newly industrialized semiperiphery countries, and the poorest periphery countries. Other writers divide the world into developed and developing countries, referring to the level of industrialization, urbanization, and modernization. Still others divide the world into the Global North and the Global South, calling attention to a history in which the Global North colonized and exploited the resources of the Global South. Finally, some writers talk about the West versus the East, where the distinctions are largely cultural. We recognize that such categories carry great symbolic meaning and can mask systems of power and exploitation. As with diversity, we attempted to find a respectful language that could be used consistently throughout the book. Again, we found that different researchers have used different language and different characteristics to describe categories of nations, and when reporting on their findings, we have used their own language to avoid misrepresenting their results.

It is important to note that privilege and disadvantage are multidimensional, not one-dimensional. One can be privileged in one dimension and disadvantaged in another; for example, I have White privilege but not gender privilege, as a female. As social workers, we need to be attuned to our own social locations, where we fit in a system of social identities, such as race, ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, religion, ability/disability, and age. We must recognize how our own particular social locations shape how we see the world, what we notice, and how we interpret what we “see.”

This is not easy for us, because in the United States, as a rule, we avoid the topic of class and don’t like to admit that it shapes our lives (Sernau, 2006). It is important for social workers to acknowledge social inequalities, however, because our interactions are constantly affected by them. In addition, there is clear evidence that social inequalities are on the rise in the United States. In the last couple of decades, the United States gained the distinction as the most unequal society in the postindustrial world, and the gap continued to widen in the midst of the deep economic recession that officially began in December 2007 (Sernau, 2006).

The Pursuit of Social Justice

There is another important reason that social workers must acknowledge social inequalities. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics (1999) identifies social justice as one of six core values of social work and mandates that “Social Workers challenge social injustice” (p. 3). To challenge injustice, we must first recognize it and understand the ways that it is embedded in a number of societal institutions. That will be the subject of Chapter 7.

Suzanne Pharr (1988) has provided some useful conceptual tools that can help us recognize injustice when we see it. She identifies a set of mechanisms of oppression, whereby the everyday arrangements of social life systematically block opportunities for some groups and inhibit their power to exercise self-determination. Exhibit 1.4 provides an overview of these mechanisms of oppression. As you review the list, you may recognize some that are familiar to you, such as stereotyping and perhaps blaming the victim. There may be others to which you have not previously given much thought. You may also recognize, as I do each time I look at the list, that while some of these mechanisms of oppression are sometimes used quite intentionally, others are not so intentional but occur as we do business as usual. For example, when you walk into your classroom, do you give much thought to the person who cleans that room, what wage this person is paid, whether this is the only job this person holds, and what opportunities
Exhibit 1.4  Common Mechanisms of Oppression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Power and Control</th>
<th>Limiting of resources, mobility, education, and employment options to all but a few</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Myth of Scarcity</td>
<td>Myth used to pit people against one another, suggests that resources are limited and blames people (e.g., poor people, immigrants) for using too many of them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defined Norm</td>
<td>A standard of what is good and right, against which all are judged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Other</td>
<td>Those who fall outside “the norm” but are defined in relation to it, seen as abnormal, inferior, marginalized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invisibility</td>
<td>Keeping “the other’s” existence, everyday life, and achievements unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distortion</td>
<td>Selective presentation or rewriting of history so that only negative aspects of “the other” are included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotyping</td>
<td>Generalizing the actions of a few to an entire group, denying individual characteristics and behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence and the Threat of Violence</td>
<td>Laying claim to resources, then using might to ensure superior position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Prior Claim</td>
<td>Excluding anyone who was not originally included and labeling as disruptive those who fight for inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaming the Victim</td>
<td>Condemning “the others” for their situation, diverting attention from the roles that dominants play in the situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalized Oppression</td>
<td>Internalizing negative judgments of being “the other,” leading to self-hatred, depression, despair, and self-abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizontal Hostility</td>
<td>Extending internalized oppression to one’s entire group as well as to other subordinate groups, expressing hostility to other oppressed persons and groups rather than to members of dominant groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>Physically isolating people as individuals or as a “minority” group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td>Pressuring members of “minority” groups to drop their culture and differences and become a mirror of the dominant culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokenism</td>
<td>Rewarding some of the most assimilated “others” with position and resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on Individual Solutions</td>
<td>Emphasizing individual responsibility for problems and individual solutions rather than collective responsibility and collective solutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Adapted from Pharr (1988).

and barriers this person has experienced in life? Most likely, the classroom is cleaned in the evening after it has been vacated by teachers and students, and the person who cleans it, like many people who provide services that make our lives more pleasant, is invisible to you. Giving serious thought to common mechanisms of oppression can help us to recognize social injustice and think about ways to challenge it.
In recent years, social workers have expanded the conversation about social justice to include global social justice. As they have done so, they have more and more drawn on the concept of human rights to organize thinking about social justice, but ideas about human rights are in the early stage of development (see Mapp, 2008; Reichert, 2006; Wronka, 2008). In the aftermath of World War II, the newly formed United Nations created a Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948), which spelled out the rights to which all humans were entitled, regardless of their place in the world, and this document has become a point of reference for subsequent definitions of human rights. Joseph Wronka argues that human rights are the bedrock of social justice. He identifies five core notions of human rights as suggested by the UDHR:

- **Human dignity**: equality and freedom
- **Nondiscrimination**: based on race, color, sex, language, religion, political opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status
- **Civil and political rights**: freedom of thought, religion, expression, access to information, privacy, and fair and public hearing
- **Economic, social, and cultural rights**: to meaningful and gainful employment, rest and leisure, health care, food, housing, education, participation in cultural life, special care for motherhood and children
- **Solidarity rights**: to a just social and international order, self-determination, peace

Mapp (2008) suggests that three main barriers prevent full access to human rights: poverty, discrimination, and lack of access to education. Manisha has experienced all three of these barriers at some point in her life.

### Critical Thinking Questions 1.2

What impact is globalization having on your own life? Do you see it as having a positive or negative impact on your life? What about for Manisha? Do you think globalization is having a positive or negative impact on her life?

### KNOWING AND DOING

Social workers, like other professional practitioners, must find a way to move from knowing to doing, from “knowing about” and “knowing that” into “knowing how to” (for fuller discussion of this issue, see Hutchison, Charlesworth, Matto, Harrigan, & Viggiani, 2007). We know for the purpose of doing. Like architects, engineers, physicians, and teachers, social workers are faced with complex problems and case situations that are unique and uncertain. You no doubt will find that social work education, social work practice, and even this book will stretch your capacity to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty. That is important because, as Carol Meyer (1993) has suggested, “There are no easy or simple [social work] cases, only simplistic perceptions” (p. 63). There is evidence that social workers have a tendency to terminate the learning process too early, to quest for answers, as opposed to appreciating the complexity of the process that may lead to multiple possible solutions (Gambrill, 2006). There are four important ingredients of “knowing how” to do social work: knowledge about the case, knowledge about the self, values and ethics, and scientific knowledge. These four ingredients are intertwined in the process of doing social work. The focus of this book is on scientific knowledge, but all four ingredients are essential in social work practice. Before moving to a discussion of scientific knowledge, I want to say a word about the other three ingredients.

### Knowledge About the Case

I am using case to mean the situation at hand, a situation that has become problematic for some person or collectivity, resulting in a social work intervention. Our first task as social workers is to develop as good an understanding of the situation as possible. Who is involved in the situation and how are they involved? What is the nature of the relationships of the people involved? What are the societal, cultural, and community contexts of the situation? What are the contextual constraints as well as the contextual resources for bringing
change to the situation? What elements of the case are maintaining the problematic situation? How have people tried to cope with the situation? What preference do the involved people have about the types of intervention to use? What is the culture and what are the social resources of the social agency to whose attention the situation is brought? You might begin to think about how you would answer some of these questions in relation to Manisha’s situation.

It is important to note that knowledge about the case is influenced by the quality of the relationship between the social worker and client(s). There is good evidence that people are likely to reveal more aspects of their situation if they are approached with commitment, an open mind, warmth, empathic attunement, authentic responsiveness, and mutuality. For example, as Manisha becomes comfortable in the interview, feeling validated by both the interviewer and the interpreter, she begins to engage in deeper reflection about what happened in Bhutan. At the end of the interview, she expresses much gratitude for the opportunity to tell her story, noting that this is the first chance she has had to put the story together and that telling the story has led her to think about some events in new ways. This can be an important part of her grieving process. The integrity of knowledge about the case is related to the quality of the relationship, and the capacity for relationship is related to knowledge about the self.

However, knowledge about the case requires more than simply gathering information. We must select and order the information at hand and decide if further information is needed. This involves making a series of decisions about what is relevant and what is not. It also involves searching for recurring themes as well as contradictions in the information. For example, it is important for the refugee resettlement social worker to note a strong theme of the desire for purpose and self-respect in Manisha’s story. Equally important is the information that Manisha shares about the knitting project sponsored by Oxfam. This may provide a clue for further program development to meet the needs of the community of Bhutanese refugees. It is also important to note Manisha’s lingering confusion about why her peaceful world in Bhutan got turned upside down. This suggests that Manisha and other Bhutanese refugees might benefit from narrative exercises that help them to make sense of these experiences.

To assist you in moving between knowledge about the case and scientific knowledge, each chapter in this book begins, as this one does, with one or more case studies. Each of these unique stories suggests which scientific knowledge is needed. For example, to work effectively with Manisha, you will want to understand some things about Bhutan, the Nepali ethnic group, Hinduism, grief reactions, the acculturation process, challenges facing immigrant families, and cross-cultural communication. Throughout the chapters, the stories are woven together with the relevant scientific knowledge. Keep in mind that scientific knowledge is necessary, but you will not be an effective practitioner unless you take the time to learn about the unique situation of each person or collectivity you serve. It is the unique situation that guides which scientific knowledge is needed.

**Knowledge About the Self**

In his book *The Spiritual Life of Children*, Robert Coles (1990) wrote about the struggles of a 10-year-old Hopi girl to have her Anglo teacher understand Hopi spirituality. Coles suggested to the girl that perhaps she could try to explain her tribal nation’s spiritual beliefs to the teacher. The girl answered, “But they don’t listen to hear us; they listen to hear themselves” (p. 25). This young girl has captured, in a profound way, a major challenge to our everyday personal and professional communications: the tendency to approach the world with preconceived notions that we seek to validate by attending to some information while ignoring other information. The capacity to understand oneself is needed to guard against this very human tendency.

Three types of self-knowledge are essential for social workers: understanding of one’s own
thinking processes, understanding of one’s own emotions, and understanding of one’s own social location. We must be able to think about our thinking, a process called *metacognition*. We also must be able to recognize what emotions get aroused in us when we hear stories like Manisha’s and when we contemplate the challenges of the situation, and we must find a way to use those emotions in ways that are helpful and avoid using them in ways that are harmful. Although writing about physicians, Gunnar Biorck (1977) said it well when he commented that practitioners make “a tremendous number of judgments each day, based on inadequate, often ambiguous data, and under pressure of time, and carrying out this task with the outward appearance of calmness, dedication and interpersonal warmth” (p. 146).

In terms of social location, as suggested earlier, social workers must identify and reflect on where they fit in a system of social identities, such as race, ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, religion, ability/disability, and age. The literature on culturally sensitive social work practice proposes that a strong personal identity in relation to important societal categories, and an understanding of the impact of those identities on other people, is essential for successful social work intervention across cultural lines (see Lum, 2007). This type of self-knowledge requires reflecting on where one fits in systems of privilege.

### Values and Ethics

The process of developing knowledge about the case is a dialogue between the social worker and client system, and social workers have a well-defined value base to guide the dialogue. Six core values of the profession have been set out in a preamble to the Code of Ethics established by the National Association for Social Workers (NASW) in 1996 and revised in 1999. These values are service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. The value of social justice was

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**Exhibit 1.5  Core Values and Ethical Principles in NASW Code of Ethics**

1. **Value:** Service  
   **Ethical Principle:** Social workers’ primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.

2. **Value:** Social Justice  
   **Ethical Principle:** Social workers challenge social injustice.

3. **Value:** Dignity and Worth of the Person  
   **Ethical Principle:** Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

4. **Value:** Importance of Human Relationships  
   **Ethical Principle:** Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.

5. **Value:** Integrity  
   **Ethical Principle:** Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.

6. **Value:** Competence  
   **Ethical Principle:** Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.

discussed earlier in the chapter. As demonstrated in Exhibit 1.5, the Code of Ethics articulates an ethical principle for each of the core values. Value 6, competence, requires that we recognize what science there is to inform our work. It requires understanding the limitations of the available science for considering the situation at hand, but also that we use the strongest available evidence to make practice decisions. This is where scientific knowledge comes into the picture.

Critical Thinking Questions 1.3
What emotional reactions did you have to reading Manisha’s story? What did you find yourself thinking about her story? Where do you see Manisha fitting in systems of privilege? Where do you see yourself fitting? How might any of this impact your ability to be helpful to Manisha?

Scientific Knowledge: Theory and Research

Ethical social workers are always searching for/recalling what is known about the situations they encounter, turning to the social and behavioral sciences for this information. Scientific knowledge serves as a screen against which the knowledge about the case is considered. It suggests hypotheses, or tentative statements, to be explored and tested, not facts to be applied, in transactions with a person or group. Because of the breadth and complexity of social work practice, usable knowledge must be culled from diverse sources and a number of scientific disciplines. Science, also known as scientific inquiry, is a set of logical, systematic, documented methods for answering questions about the world. Scientific knowledge is the knowledge produced by scientific inquiry. Two interrelated approaches to knowledge building, theory and empirical research, fit the scientific criteria of being logical, systematic, and documented for the public. Together, they create the base of knowledge that social workers need to understand commonalities among their clients and practice situations.

In your course work on social work research, you will be learning much more about these concepts, so only a brief description is provided here to help you understand how this book draws on theory and research.

Theory

Social workers use theory to help organize and make sense of the situations they encounter. A theory is a logically interrelated set of concepts and propositions, organized into a deductive system, that explains relationships among aspects of our world. As Elaine Leeder (2004) so aptly put it, “To have a theory is to have a way of explaining the world—an understanding that the world is not just a random series of events and experiences” (p. 9).

Theory is a somewhat imposing word, seemingly abstract and associated with serious scholars, but it has everyday utility for social workers:

Scratch any social worker and you will find a theoretician. Her own theoretical perspectives about people and practice may be informed by theories in print (or formal theories) but are put together in her own way with many modifications and additions growing out of her own professional and personal experience. (W. Reid & Smith, 1989, p. 45)

Thus, theory gives us a framework for interpreting person and environment and planning interventions. Theories focus our attention on particular aspects of the person-environment-time configuration.

Other terms that you will often encounter in discussions of theories are model, paradigm, and perspective. Model usually is used to refer to a visual representation of the relationships between concepts. Paradigm is usually used to mean a way of seeing the world, and perspective is an emphasis or a view. Paradigms and perspectives are broader and more general than theory.
If you are to make good use of theory, you should know something about how it is constructed. Concepts are the building blocks of theory. They are symbols, or mental images, that summarize observations, feelings, or ideas. Concepts allow us to communicate about the phenomena of interest. Some relevant concepts in Manisha’s story are culture, Hinduism, Buddhism, cultural conflict, refugee, acculturation, loss, grief, dignity, and self-reliance.

Theoretical concepts are put together to form propositions or assertions. For example, loss and grief theory proposes that loss of a person, object, or ideal leads to a grief reaction. This proposition, which asserts a particular relationship between the concepts of loss and grief, may help the refugee resettlement social worker understand some of the sadness, and sometimes despair, that she sees in her work with Bhutanese refugee families. They have lived with an accumulation of losses—loss of land, loss of livelihood, loss of roles, loss of status, loss of extended family members, loss of familiar language and rituals, and many more.

Theories are a form of deductive reasoning, meaning that they lay out general, abstract propositions that we can use to generate specific hypotheses to test in unique situations. In this example, loss and grief theory can lead us to hypothesize that many Bhutanese refugees are grieving the many losses they have suffered.

Social and behavioral science theories are based on assumptions, or beliefs held to be true without testing or proof, about the nature of human social life. These theoretical assumptions have raised a number of controversies, three of which are worth introducing at this point (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; P. Y. Martin & O’Connor, 1989; Monte & Sollod, 2003):

1. Do the dimensions of human behavior have an objective reality that exists outside a person’s consciousness, or is all reality based on personal perception (subjective reality)?
2. Is human behavior determined by forces beyond the control of the person (determinism), or are persons free and proactive agents in the creation of their behavior (voluntarism)?
3. Are the patterned interactions among people characterized by harmony, unity, and social cohesion or by conflict, domination, coercion, and exploitation?

The nature of these controversies will become more apparent to you in Chapter 2. The contributing authors and I take a middle ground on all of them: We assume that reality has both objective and subjective aspects, that human behavior is partially constrained and partially free, and that social life is marked by both cohesion and conflict.

**Empirical Research**

Traditionally, science is equated with empirical research, which is widely held as the most rigorous and systematic way to understand human behavior. Research is typically viewed, in simple terms, as a problem-solving process, or a method of seeking answers to questions. If something is empirical, we experience it through our senses, as opposed to something that we experience purely in our minds. The process of empirical research includes a careful, purposeful, and systematic observation of events with the intent to note and record them in terms of their attributes, to look for patterns in those events, and to make our methods and observations public. Like theory, empirical research is a key tool for social workers: “The practitioner who just conforms to ongoing practices without keeping abreast of the latest research in his or her field is not doing all possible to see that his or her clients get the best possible service” (A. Rubin & Babbie, 1993, p. xxv).

Just as there are controversies about theoretical assumptions, there are also controversies about what constitutes appropriate research methods for understanding human behavior. Modern science is based on several assumptions, which are together generally recognized as a positivist perspective: The world has an order that can be discovered, findings of one study should be applicable to other
groups, complex phenomena can be studied by reducing them to some component part, findings are tentative and subject to question, and scientific methods are value-free. **Quantitative methods of research** are the preferred methods from the positivist perspective. These methods use quantifiable measures of concepts, standardize the collection of data, attend only to preselected variables, and use statistical methods to look for patterns and associations (Schutt, 2009).

Over the years, the positivist perspective and its claim that positivism = science have been challenged. Critics argue that quantitative methods cannot possibly capture the subjective experience of individuals or the complex nature of social life. Although most of these critics do not reject positivism as *a way* of doing science, they recommend other ways of understanding the world and suggest that these alternative methods should also be considered part of science. Various names have been given to these alternative methods. We will be referring to them as the **interpretist perspective**, because they share the assumption that reality is based on people’s definitions of it and that research should focus on learning the meanings that people give to their situations. This is also referred to as a **constructivist perspective**.

Interpretists see a need to replace existing methods with **qualitative methods of research**, which are more flexible, more experiential, and designed to capture how participants view social life rather than to ask participants to respond to categories preset by the researcher (Schutt, 2009). Participant observation, intensive interviewing, and focus groups are examples of qualitative methods of research. Interpretists assume that people’s behavior cannot be observed objectively, that reality is created as researcher and research participants interact. Researchers using qualitative methods are more likely to present their findings in words than in numbers and to attempt to capture the settings of behavior. They are likely to report the transactions of researcher and participant as well as the values of the researcher, because they assume that value-free research is impossible.

Photo 1.3  Theories and research about human behavior are boundless and constantly growing. Active readers must question what they read.
In this controversy, it is our position that no single research method can adequately capture the whole, the complexity, of human behavior. In fact, “we must often settle for likely, approximate, or partial truths” (Kirk & Reid, 2002, p. 16). Both quantitative and qualitative research methods have a place in a multidimensional approach, and used together they may help us to see more dimensions of situations. Alvin Saperstein (1996) has stated our view well: “Science is a fabric: its ability to cover the world depends upon the existence of many different fibers acting together to give it structure and strength” (p. 163). This view has much in common with postpositivism, which developed in response to criticism of positivism. Postpositivism is a philosophical position that recognizes the complexity of reality and the limitations of human observers. It proposes that scientists can never develop more than a partial understanding of human behavior (Schutt, 2009). Nevertheless, science remains the most rigorous and systematic way to understand human behavior.

Critical Use of Theory and Research

You may already know that social and behavioral science theory and research have been growing at a fast pace in modern times, and you will often feel, as McAvoy (1999) aptly put it, that you are “drowning in a swamp of information” (p. 19), both case information and scientific information. Phillip Dybicz (2004) considers it a strength of the profession that social workers have been more willing than other social and behavioral scientists and professionals to wade into the swamp. Ironically, as you are drowning in a swamp of information, you will also be discovering that the available scientific information is incomplete. You will also encounter contradictory ideas that must be held simultaneously and, where possible, coordinated to develop an integrated picture of the situation at hand. That is, as you might guess, not a simple project. It involves weighing available evidence and analyzing its relevance to the situation at hand. That requires critical thinking. Critical thinking is a thoughtful and reflective judgment about alternative views and contradictory information. It involves thinking about your own thinking and the influences on that thinking, as well as a willingness to change your mind. It also involves careful analysis of assumptions and evidence. Critical thinkers also ask, “What is left out of this conceptualization or research?” Throughout the book, we will call out critical thinking questions to support your efforts to think critically.

As you read this book and other sources of scientific knowledge, you will want to begin to think critically about the theory and research that they present. You will want to give careful thought to the credibility of the claims made. Let’s look first at theory. It is important to remember that although theorists may try to put checks on their biases, they write from their own cultural frame of reference and from a particular location in the social structure of their society. So, when taking a critical look at a theory, it is important to remember that theories are generally created by people of privileged backgrounds who operate in seats of power. The bulk of theories still used today were authored by White, middle- to upper-class Western European men and men in the United States with academic appointments. Therefore, as we work in a highly diversified world, we need to be attentive to the possibilities of biases related to race, gender, culture, religion, sexual orientation, abilities/disabilities, and social class—as well as professional or occupational orientation. One particular concern is that such biases can lead us to think of disadvantaged members of society or of members of minority groups as pathological or deficient.

Social and behavioral science scholars disagree about the criteria for evaluating theory and research. However, I recommend the criteria presented in Exhibit 1.6 because they are consistent with the multidimensional approach of this book and with the value base of the social work profession. (The five criteria for evaluating theory presented in Exhibit 1.6 are also used in Chapter 2 to evaluate eight theoretical perspectives relevant to
There is agreement in the social and behavioral sciences that theory should be evaluated for coherence and conceptual clarity as well as for testability and evidence of empirical support. The criterion of comprehensiveness is specifically related to the multidimensional approach of this book. We do not expect all theories to be multidimensional in nature, but critical analysis of a
theory should help us identify deterministic and unidimensional thinking where they exist. The criterion of consistency with emphasis on diversity and power arrangements examines the utility of the theory for a profession that places high value on social justice. In addition, the criterion of usefulness for practice is essential for a profession.

Just as theory may be biased toward the experiences of members of dominant groups, so too may research be biased. The result may be “misleading and, in some cases, [may lead to] outright false conclusions regarding a minority” (Monette, Sullivan, & DeJong, 2008, p. 8). Bias can occur at all stages of the research process.

- Funding sources and other vested interests have a strong influence on which problems are selected for research attention. For example, several critics have suggested that governmental agencies were slow to fund research on acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) because it was associated in the early years with gay males (Shilts, 1987).

- Bias can occur in the definition of variables for study. For example, using “offenses cleared by arrest” as the definition of crime, rather than using a definition such as “self-reported crime involvement,” leads to an overestimation of crime among minority groups of color, because those are the people who are most often arrested for their crimes (Hagan, 1994).

- Bias can occur in choosing the sample to be studied. Because of their smaller numbers, members of minority groups may not be included in sufficient numbers to demonstrate the variability within a particular minority group. Or a biased sample of minorities may be used (e.g., it is not uncommon to make Black vs. White comparisons on a sample that includes middle-class Whites and low-income Blacks).

- Bias can occur in data collection. The validity and reliability of most standardized measuring instruments have been evaluated by using them with White, non-Hispanic respondents, and their cultural relevance with ethnic minorities is questionable. Language and literacy difficulties may arise with both written survey instruments and interviews. Several potential sources of errors when majority researchers gather data from members of minority groups are minority group members’ mistrust and fear, their motivation to provide what is perceived to be wanted, shame and embarrassment, joking or making sport of the researcher, answering based on the ideal rather than the real, and inadequacy of questions (e.g., asking about a monthly income with families that will have to do a complex computation of incomes of different family members: “income from selling fruit and Popsicles on weekends, income from helping another family make cheese once every two to three weeks, extra money brought in by giving haircuts and permanents to neighborhood women, or occasional childcare and sewing” [Goodson-Lawes, 1994, p. 24]).

As with theory evaluation, there is no universally agreed-upon set of criteria for evaluating research. We recommend the nine criteria presented in Exhibit 1.6 for considering the credibility of a research report. These criteria can be applied to either quantitative or qualitative research. Many research reports would be strengthened if their authors were to attend to these criteria.

A WORD OF CAUTION

In this book, Part I includes two stage-setting chapters that introduce the framework for the book and provide a foundation for thinking critically about the discussions of theory and research presented in Parts II and III. Part II comprises three chapters that analyze the multiple dimensions of persons—one chapter each on the biological person, the psychological person, and the spiritual person, and four chapters that discuss environmental dimensions, including the physical environment, culture, social structure and social institutions, formal organizations, communities, social movements, small groups, and families. Part III overviews the life course perspective and includes seven chapters that examine theory and research about phases of the human life course.
Presenting personal and environmental dimensions separately, as I do in Part II, is a risky approach. I do not wish to reinforce any tendency to think about human behavior in a way that camouflages the inseparability of person and environment. I have taken this approach, however, for two reasons. First, the personal and environmental dimensions, for the most part, have been studied separately, often by different disciplines, and usually as detached or semidetached entities. Second, I want to introduce some dimensions of persons and environments not typically covered in social work textbooks and provide updated knowledge about all the dimensions. However, it is important to remember that no single dimension of human behavior can be understood without attention to other dimensions. Thus, frequent references to other dimensions throughout Part II should help develop an understanding of the unity of persons, environments, and time. Part III illustrates the complex interaction of person and environment as we make the journey through the human life course.

Implications for Social Work Practice

The multidimensional approach outlined in this chapter suggests several principles for social work assessment and intervention, for both prevention and remediation services:

- In the assessment process, collect information about all the critical dimensions of the changing configuration of person and environment.
- In the assessment process, attempt to see the situation from a variety of perspectives. Use multiple data sources, including the person(s), significant others, and direct observations.
- Allow people to tell their own stories, and pay attention to how they describe the pattern and flow of their person-environment configurations.
- Use the multidimensional database to develop a dynamic picture of the person-environment configuration.
- Link intervention strategies to the dimensions of the assessment.
- In general, expect more effective outcomes from interventions that are multidimensional, because the situation itself is multidimensional.
- Pay particular attention to the impact of diversity and inequality on the unique stories and situations that you encounter.
- Allow the unique stories of people and situations to direct the choice of theory and research to be used.
- Use scientific knowledge to suggest tentative hypotheses to be explored in the unique situation.

Key Terms

acculturation  
assumptions  
biopsychosocial approach  
concepts  
critical thinking  
deductive reasoning  
determinism  
dimension  
diversity  
empirical research  
globalization  
heterogeneity  
hypotheses  
interpretivist perspective  
linear time  
multidetermined behavior  
multidimensional  
objective reality  
positivist perspective  
postpositivism  
privilege
propositions
quantitative methods of research
theory

Active Learning

1. We have used multiple dimensions of person, environment, and time to think about Manisha’s story. If you were the social worker at the refugee resettlement agency that sponsored her family’s resettlement, you would bring your own unfolding person-environment-time story to that encounter. With the graphic in Exhibit 1.1 as your guide, write your own multidimensional story. What personal dimensions are important? What environmental dimensions? What time dimensions? What might happen when these two stories encounter each other?

2. Select a social issue that interests you, such as child abuse or youth gangs. List five things that you “know” about this issue. Think about how you know what you know. How would you go about confirming or disproving your current state of knowledge on this topic?

Web Resources

Each chapter of this textbook contains a list of Internet resources and websites that may be useful to readers in their search for further information. Each site listing includes the web address and a brief description of the contents of the site. Readers should be aware that the information contained in websites may not be truthful or reliable and should be confirmed before the site is used as a reference. Readers should also be aware that Internet addresses, or URLs, are constantly changing; therefore, the addresses listed may no longer be active or accurate. Many of the Internet sites listed in each chapter contain links to other Internet sites containing more information on the topic. Readers may use these links for further investigation.

Information not included in the Web Resources sections of each chapter can be found by using one of the many search engines on the Internet. Below, we list the search engines first.

www.google.com
www.bing.com
www.cuil.com

www.ask.com
www.yahoo.com
www.excite.com
www.lycos.com

There are several Internet sites that are maintained by and for social workers, some at university schools of social work and some by professional associations:

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)
www.cswe.org

CSWE is the accrediting body for academic social work programs; site contains information about accreditation, projects, publications, and links to a number of social work–related websites.

Information for Practice
www.nyu.edu/socialwork/ip/

Site was developed and is maintained by Professor Gary Holden of New York University’s School of Social Work, contains links to many
federal and state Internet sites as well as journals, assessment and measurement tools, and sites maintained by professional associations.

International Federation of Social Workers
www.ifsw.org

Site contains information about international conferences, policy papers on selected issues, and links to human rights groups and other social work organizations.

National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
www.naswdc.org

Site contains professional development material, press room, advocacy information, and resources.

Social Work Access Network (SWAN)
www.sc.edu/swan/

Site presented by the University of South Carolina College of Social Work, contains social work topics, list of schools of social work, upcoming conferences, and online chats.

Social Work and Social Services Web Sites
http://gwbweb/wustl.edu/Resources/Pages/socialserviceresourcesintro.aspx

Site presented by the George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, contains links to resources for a wide variety of social issues and social service organizations.