

Acknowledgements

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Jeffrey Edleson, Professor and Dean, Berkeley Social Welfare
Rodger Lum, Executive Director

Who We Are

The social work academic community and public social services in California joined forces in 1990 to create the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC), considered the most ambitious such collaboration in the country at the time. The founding members, especially UC Berkeley School of Social Welfare Dean Harry Specht, had the vision for a statewide partnership that would more effectively and systematically address the social service needs of vulnerable and at-risk children and families by developing a well-trained and committed workforce. Today, CalSWEC is the nation's largest state coalition of social work educators and practitioners. Unique in its size and scope, the CalSWEC collaborative provides professional education and training, student support, and workforce evaluation and research—all directed toward developing effective, culturally competent public service delivery to the people of California.

Our Challenges

California's increasing size and diversity are reflected in the need for services to become more complex and better integrated to effectively serve vulnerable and at-risk populations. They include children and adolescents who experience abuse and neglect; individuals with mental or emotional distress that may prompt substance use and abuse; older adults in frail health and at risk of physical, emotional or financial abuse; people living in persistent poverty; and others who experience discrimination based on race, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, disability, age, and/or religious beliefs.

Adding to this challenge are recent changes to federal and state law and public policies in child welfare, mental health, aging, and health care, including the Mental Health Services Act, the Child Welfare Core Practice Model, the Affordable Care Act, and the Katie A. settlement agreement. To be successful, these systemic adjustments require closer collaboration among services in child welfare, mental health or behavioral health, and aging to improve client outcomes and reduce unnecessary duplication of efforts and resources.

These changes require that the workforce be better prepared and trained to work across disciplines and to function more effectively through integrated intervention models and approaches. The number of professional social workers also needs to increase significantly to meet these demands. The Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development reported in 2011 that California would need an additional 22,000 social workers by 2015, for an estimated total of 82,000 workers. Unfortunately, the supply of social workers is not keeping pace with demand.

Funding streams that focus primarily on training and educating students and workers in very specific areas or "silos," such as mental health, child welfare, aging, and health, pose a major challenge to CalSWEC's ability to develop a workforce that functions in a more integrative manner. With the emergence of national health care reform and local realignment efforts, there

is increasing emphasis on integrating practice expertise and research knowledge with the goal of reducing compartmentalization. The CalSWEC structure, both in staff and Board committee operations, currently reflects these “silos,” and will require re-imagining in order to achieve more efficient and effective planning, communication, and coordination.

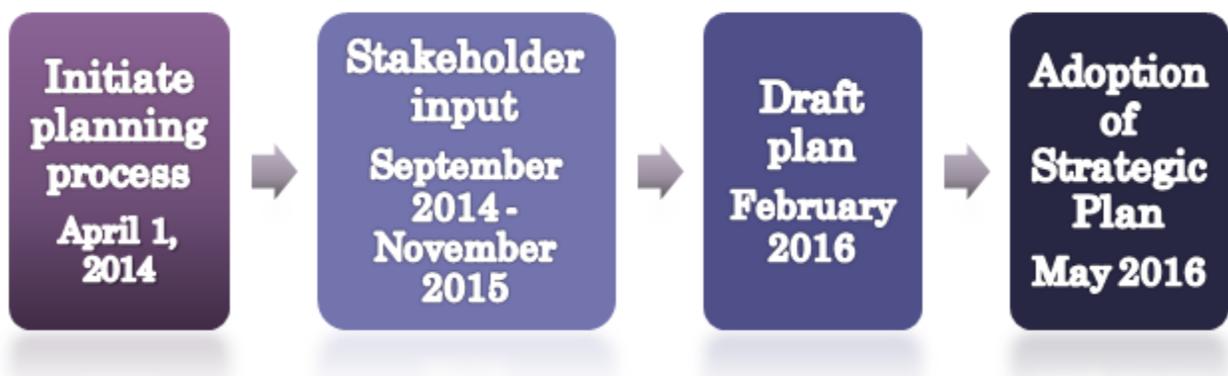
The social work profession, and CalSWEC’s role in supporting it, must evolve to reflect these shifting demands and challenges. The workforce development infrastructure must advance a new strategic direction that demonstrates the strengths of current education and training systems and models. We must also question institutionalized beliefs and approaches that need refreshing due to inefficiencies and outdated practices. With an eye toward continuous improvement, CalSWEC and its partners can remain pioneers and leaders in social work education and training.

Strategic Planning Process

Prior to the current strategic planning effort, CalSWEC conducted a similar, exhaustive planning process in 2001 that included key informant interviews. This process resulted in a five-year plan adopted by the Board that highlighted the need to develop new programs beyond child welfare. It also raised critical questions about CalSWEC’s sustainability through its UC Berkeley hosting arrangement at a time when the State was suffering from recession-driven budgetary concerns.

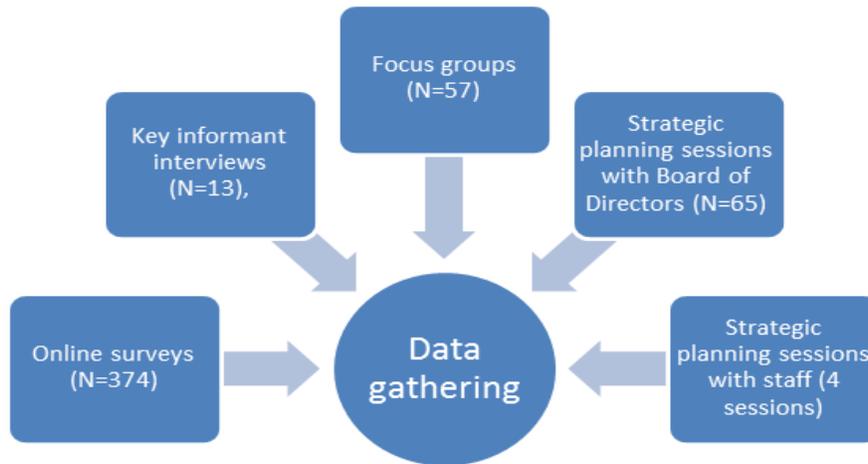
Nearly a decade later since those efforts, in September 2010, CalSWEC presented a report to the Board on its progress and accomplishments. In 2011, based on input from mental health stipend project coordinators and other stakeholders, staff updated the strategic plan to include more mental health-focused goals and objectives.

More recently, CalSWEC staff felt it was time to revise its plan to reflect a growing desire to reorganize both internal and Board operations. This led to the submission of a grant proposal to the Zellerbach Family Foundation in January 2014. The Foundation awarded \$75,000 that would cover 24 months of planning, beginning April 1, 2014.

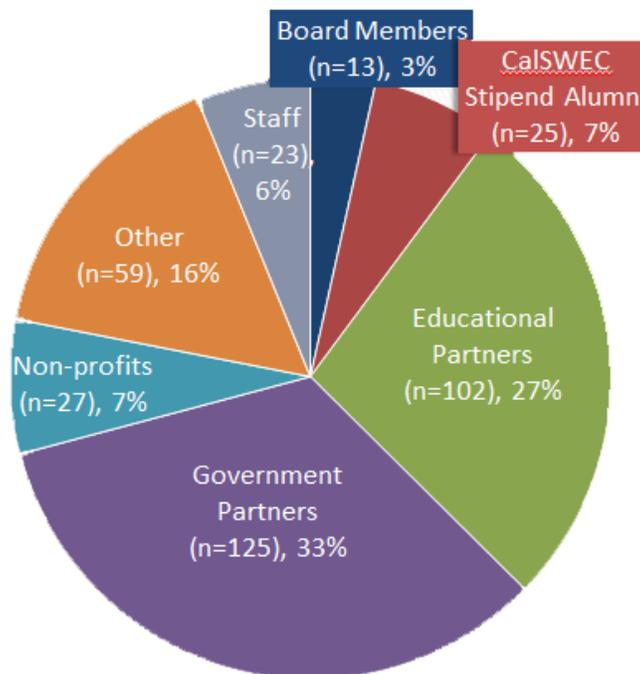


Strategic Planning Process and Methods

Most of the Zellerbach Family Foundation funding was used to contract with an outside planning firm, The Kiely Group. The Kiely Group designed the strategic planning process and used multiple data gathering methods to generate stakeholder input.



Over 500 diverse CalSWEC constituents, including Board members, project coordinators, CalSWEC staff, and other organizations and associations with which CalSWEC works, participated in this process. In addition, 60% of participants had over five years of experience with CalSWEC and were able to speak knowledgeably about the organization.



Survey Findings

Finally, CalSWEC initiated an online survey of Board members and project coordinators in November 2015 as a follow up to the September Board meeting. The purpose was to solicit feedback on possible mission statements, the length and frequency of Board meetings, and various ways to restructure Board committees.

Mission

Stakeholders had an opportunity to discuss alternative mission statements at the September 2015 Board meeting and to identify their preferred mission statement through an online survey in November 2015. CalSWEC's new mission statement affirms its emphasis on partnerships in social work education and training, while focusing on the role of social work professionals across a broader continuum of services:

“CalSWEC facilitates and supports statewide partnerships for the education and training of social workers to ensure culturally responsive, effective, and high-quality health and social service delivery to the people of California.”

CalSWEC's Critical Accomplishments

An earlier survey asked respondents to identify CalSWEC's greatest strengths, three greatest accomplishments to date, and what distinguishes CalSWEC from other institutions in the region, state and nation. Responses to these questions were combined to describe CalSWEC's contributions to the field. The most commonly noted accomplishment was that CalSWEC creates strong collaborative efforts and partnerships, especially between county agencies and educational institutions. The next most frequently noted accomplishment was that CalSWEC is effective at improving the child welfare and mental health workforce. The final accomplishment noted by many participants was CalSWEC's role in coordinating statewide training, especially in updating Common Core 3.0 and working with the Regional Training Academies to “meet in-service training needs, leading the state in innovations related to child welfare training.”

Communication Gaps

Survey participants were asked about their levels of knowledge of various CalSWEC initiatives and efforts. Responses to these questions revealed some lack of awareness of CalSWEC's aging, research and evaluation, and mental health activities. This was most pronounced in relation to Aging, with one-third of participants unfamiliar with the aging curriculum competencies, aging initiative summits, Aging Initiative work plan development, and efforts around knowledge building for the aging field. About the same proportion were unaware of CalSWEC's Ecological Model for Workforce Development and Mental Health Program evaluation efforts. In addition, fewer than one in four participants were aware of CalSWEC's work around mental health

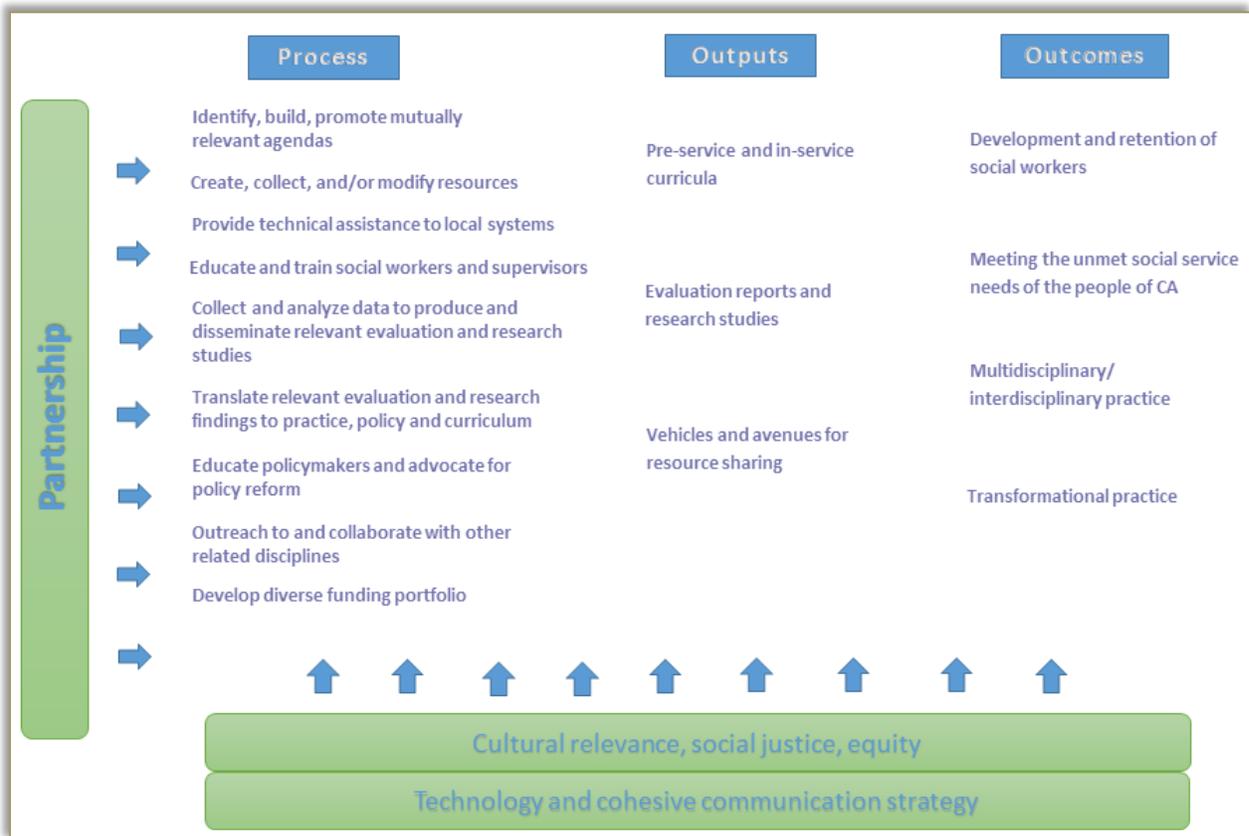
curriculum competencies, curriculum and other program resources, and technical assistance and consultation.

These findings suggest that not all facets of what CalSWEC does are familiar to its stakeholders, especially those outside the organization and those involved with only one program area. Someone focused only on the IV-E stipend program, for example, may not be aware of work within the Mental Health and Aging programs.

Survey results reflect that CalSWEC programs are valued for their contributions to workforce development and collaboration. However, some participants voiced dissenting opinions about CalSWEC’s accomplishments and priorities, which warrant acknowledgement and consideration for improvement.

Focus Group, Interview & Planning Session Findings

Using proprietary software, the Kiely Group evaluated narrative feedback solicited during the strategic planning process and identified key themes and goals that resonated with CalSWEC stakeholders. The themes generated during this analysis are detailed in Appendix A. The goals identified were prioritized by staff during two subsequent planning sessions and conceptualized as follows:



Next Steps

CalSWEC Central leadership and staff will use the issues, themes, and goals identified through these analyses to develop specific action steps during FY 2016–17. These action steps will be used to guide the organization through a series of proposed changes over the next several years.

Reorganization of Board Membership and Meetings

Since the founding of CalSWEC 25 years ago, the Board of Directors has grown to 49 members. Based on stakeholder input, the Board's size and composition will not change. However, most participants preferred meeting two to three times per year for one full day, rather than over one and one-half days three times per year. We will also improve the efficiency of each Board meeting by convening online meetings between Board sessions and disseminating meeting materials further in advance.

Another change to improve efficiency is the move to convene three committee meetings instead of six at Board meetings. These three (permanent) committees are Curriculum & In-Service Training, Workforce Development & Funding, and Research & Development. Each committee will include members of the Aging, Child Welfare, and Mental Health Committees. This new format will reduce duplication in discussions and recommendations while promoting cross-disciplinary collaboration and communication, and may require changes to CalSWEC's by-laws.

Organizational Restructuring

One major impetus for CalSWEC's strategic planning effort was a desire to reduce the "silos" among its core initiatives, Child Welfare, Mental Health, and Aging, through better communication and planning, which may require reorganizing its programs. The overarching goal is to promote more effective ways to work across related issues, themes, and priorities.

One approach for restructuring staff operations is matrix management. Special teams could be composed of staff in each of the three program initiatives, with intersecting teams of staff interested in research and evaluation, curriculum development, training and education. The program directors would serve as leads for their respective programs, and the special team leads would be based on factors such as expertise and interest. It is not a requirement that the special team lead be an executive team member. This approach spreads responsibility more broadly across the organization and provides additional growth opportunities for staff.

Executive Leadership

Given CalSWEC's size, complexity, and growth over recent years, it is essential that leadership be provided by a full-time Executive Director who can also serve as Principal Investigator. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) supports Berkeley Social Welfare's request for

a full-time executive director. CalSWEC has allocated funding for this position starting in FY 2016–17, and fund development efforts will continue to make this sustainable.

Hosting and Auspice

CalSWEC was founded 25 years ago as a partnership among 10 schools of social work and 58 county departments of social services, with Berkeley Social Welfare serving as the host institution. At the time, the costs to host CalSWEC were less significant given the small staff and the initial contract for IV-E stipends. However, this model is no longer sustainable given the State's budget cuts to public institutions of higher education and the expansion of the CalSWEC consortium to 22 schools. This financial burden has renewed the call for finding an alternate host arrangement, and Berkeley Social Welfare has proposed the creation of a Joint Powers Authority between the UC and CSU systems. However, it remains open to other possibilities that could mitigate the administrative and financial burdens that would make it possible for Berkeley to retain CalSWEC. These include multi-year contracts with CDSS for the IV-E stipend program, beginning in FY 2016–17, and the inclusion of an acceptable indirect cost rate.

Communications

One goal of the strategic planning effort is to de-silo, promoting greater understanding and coordination among CalSWEC's various programs. The strategic planning stakeholder input process revealed that key partners lack awareness and understanding of the scope of CalSWEC's work. In order to address the need to better engage our stakeholders and partners, CalSWEC will develop a more comprehensive communications and collaboration strategy in 2016.

Future Opportunities

As CalSWEC has developed over the years, so has the call for greater involvement in other areas of workforce development wherein its expertise and experience in education and training would be instrumental. With significant developments in health care reform and service delivery systems, CalSWEC has an extraordinary opportunity to both pursue innovation and provide substantial and timely contributions.

Integrated Behavioral Health

The co-morbidity of mental health and substance abuse has been long established by clinical studies and service provider observations. The advent of the Affordable Care Act has also cemented the need for integrating health and behavioral health care and early intervention and prevention strategies in order to improve consumer outcomes. Social work programs have mirrored these trends by expanding traditional mental health curricula to include behavioral health and public health content, and by creating new curricula focused on integrated behavioral health.

CalSWEC created its mental health stipend program in 2005, and it has focused exclusively on mental health training. However, in 2014 CalSWEC partnered with Berkeley Social Welfare to obtain a grant from HRSA (Health Resources & Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) for behavioral health care training for social workers. This demonstrates CalSWEC's interest in expanding its mental health training and education to include a broader focus on behavioral health care. It is now timely for all of our university partners to offer integrated health/behavioral health stipends. This may be possible through a number of avenues, including future State funding of mental health stipend programs, local county-supported stipends, and the implementation of Proposition 47, which makes significant improvements to the state's criminal justice system.

Criminal Justice and Proposition 47

Social workers are already involved in the criminal justice system as counselors and probation officers in county departments and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. With the November 2014 passage of Proposition 47, a burgeoning opportunity exists for social workers to provide mental health and substance abuse treatment within these systems in order to reduce recidivism.

It is key to the successful implementation of these efforts that more social workers are trained in integrated behavioral health. CalSWEC could advocate for and seek funding for behavioral health stipends for MSW students interested in careers in criminal justice and local health and behavioral health programs. It could also advocate for and provide in-service training in integrated behavioral health for current workers, building on the existing Regional Training Academy infrastructure that is well positioned to work with counties.

Aging and Behavioral Health

With advances in health care and health promotion, more Americans are living longer. Population demographics reveal that the number of Americans aged 65 and older is increasing significantly and the number aged 85 and older is increasing dramatically. Social workers play a key role in providing services to older adults, and that role will expand as service demands increase. It is critical that CalSWEC work with its university and county partners to develop the social work workforce to meet these needs.

The need for more trained social work professionals to work with older Americans is evident, especially in behavioral health care. According to the U.S. Administration on Aging, "One in four persons aged 55 and over experiences behavioral health disorders that are not part of the normal aging process. Older adults are significantly less likely to receive any mental health treatment when compared to younger adults" (Older Americans' Behavioral Health, 2012).

In order to address these critical concerns, CalSWEC Board members and staff have worked hard over the years to establish the Aging Initiative and develop curriculum competencies in aging that now serve as a national model. Given the limited number of social workers qualified

to work with seniors and the growing population of older adults in California, another major goal of this initiative is to advocate for stipends for geriatric social work students similar to those available for IV-E and Mental Health students.

Continuing the Aging Initiative requires funding from the Discretionary Fund Account, which is challenging given other demands. CalSWEC will pursue foundation grants and government contracts, and work with the Board on increasing membership dues, to support the Aging Initiative. Another possible source of funding may come from federal behavioral health initiatives.

International Social Work

Many countries around the world are interested in improving social services through information and professional exchange with the United States because the U.S. is regarded as advanced in the education and training of social workers. The United States is respected for its emphasis on evidence-informed practice, a democratic system within which innovation is valued, the questioning of traditional practices, and the focus on delivering culturally responsive services to a diverse population.

Given this high regard, CalSWEC periodically receives requests for consultation and technical assistance and continues to explore opportunities to share its expertise with interested countries worldwide. Currently, CalSWEC has subcontracted with Thammasat University in Thailand for a UNICEF-funded nine-month situational analysis of Thai social workers. CalSWEC will also work closely with Berkeley Social Welfare to provide technical assistance, consultation, and mutual information exchange with the government of Gujarat, India. In addition, CalSWEC is actively looking into collaborating with the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) to explore international opportunities for knowledge exchange, training and consultation in Africa.

Funding, Growth, and Sustainability

This strategic plan includes ideas for new initiatives and programs, as well plans for the growth of existing ones. An essential element of this plan is the development of a sustainable and effective way to identify, respond to, and secure funding opportunities from foundations and local, state, and federal governments. The full-time Executive Director will assume primary responsibility for coordinating CalSWEC's funding and development efforts.

Despite the development of new efforts, such as the Aging Initiative and other increasing cost demands, CalSWEC's Discretionary Account has been funded almost exclusively by membership dues that have remained static for many years. To address these demands, CalSWEC Central proposes that the Board approve an increase in membership dues to help fund the Aging Initiative, expansion of the Mental Health/Integrated Behavioral Health Program, the hiring of a full-time Executive Director, and other important needs as they arise.

Conclusion

Many challenges, including emerging and unmet health and human service needs, face the social work profession, as the field becomes more complex and greater numbers of well-trained, adept, and culturally responsive professionals are required to meet increasing social service needs. Social workers, including social work students, must be prepared to address the social and economic inequalities that contribute to and exacerbate abuse and neglect, persistent poverty, and poor health and mental health outcomes. CalSWEC, as a partnership of CDSS, counties, universities, Tribes and Indigenous organizations, professional social work organizations, and other community stakeholders, can help achieve these goals through practice, policy, advocacy, and research. CalSWEC must respond determinedly with a strong voice for the crucial role the field of social work can and must play in social change.

Appendix A: Narrative Analysis of Themes and Goals

Theme 1: CalSWEC as Thought Leader/Convener

1. Create, sustain and expand a partnership that serves as a global model for effective and innovative social work practice and professional development.
2. Identify, build and promote mutual agendas relevant to social work constituencies.
3. Serve as a leading clearinghouse, resource and repository for social work professional development.
4. Undertake partnership and research activities that leverage our collective influence to promote and advocate for social justice and equity.
5. Educate policymakers about the social and fiscal value of investing in social work professional development.

Theme 2: CalSWEC as Capacity Builder

1. Create, collect and/or modify materials and resources to support high quality education, training and professional development.
2. Infuse cultural relevance, social justice, and equity throughout all activities, curriculum and ongoing practice and do so in a technically appropriate way.
3. Assist local systems, including those in urban, rural and remote areas, to be responsive and to deliver high quality, affordable education and professional development of social workers.
4. Advocate for the growth and increased capacity of academic and service delivery programs to address the unmet needs of the people of California.
5. In partnership with employers, promote the development and retention of social workers throughout their careers.

Theme 3: CalSWEC as Research Leader

1. To facilitate collaborative research on emerging and innovative methodologies to study workforce development in CalSWEC areas of interest.
2. Disseminate and translate relevant research through the most effective modalities and/or serve as a resource to find relevant research.
3. Promote the importance of the social work profession through data collection, analysis, documentation, and dissemination.
4. Foster evaluation and field research that examines connections between social work employment practices and quality of service.

Theme 4: CalSWEC as Advocate/Protector of Quality Social Work

1. Promote creative and informative evidence-informed and culturally relevant practices to support high quality services.
2. Support, educate and train students and practitioners and supervisors for transformational practice.
3. Encourage supervisory, management practices, and organizational cultures that promote, value and ensure high quality practice.

Theme 5: CalSWEC as Relationship Builder/Connector

1. Define “partnership” as it relates to mutuality of goals, program activities, program outcomes, alignment of services.
2. Partner more closely with identified entities (e.g., local, state, tribal, and national leaders).
3. Build outreach strategies to other disciplines (education/schools, mental health, corrections, law enforcement, local courts, gerontology) to reinforce the need for collaboration and the inter-relationships between/among these disciplines to produce better outcomes.