

Best Practices for Social Work with Refugees and Immigrants
Chapter Reading Questions

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Describe three things that you learned or were surprised by in Chapter 1.
2. What was new or surprising about this information?
3. How have your views about immigrants, migrants, and refugees changed since reading this chapter?

Chapter 2: International Migration Policies

1. How does knowing the immigrant integration policies of other countries affect our own work?
2. What is the difference between human rights and national and international laws and policies?
3. How might we focus our professional work differently knowing global human rights themes and national responses to them?
4. What is the importance of the UN in global social policies and in protecting human rights?

Chapter 3: U.S. Immigration & Refugee Policies¹

Please respond to TWO of the following questions:

1. Select one of the times that the U.S. has restricted immigration, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act. Would you consider this to be a historical trauma for the affected ethnic group? Why or why not?
2. Several commentators have expressed worry over what they call the “browning” of America due to immigration and the lower birth rates of White families. As a social worker, how would you respond to these remarks?
3. In 2017, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) stated its opposition to the “Muslim ban.” What other positions has the NASW taken regarding immigrants and refugees?

Chapter 4: Service Delivery Systems

1. How does the content in this chapter connect with what you already knew about the topic?
2. Find a quote in this chapter that is interesting to you and explain why you chose it.

Chapter 5: Culturally Competent Practice

1. Identify a past encounter you had with someone from a different culture (ideally, an immigrant, refugee, or migrant) that, in retrospect, you did not handle in a fully culturally competent manner.
2. Describe what happened in the encounter.
3. Which of the 10 NASW standards of cultural competence did you not meet, and in what way(s)?
4. Based on what you have learned in this chapter, how would you handle this situation differently?

Chapter 6: Health Issues¹

Please respond to TWO of the following questions:

1. In 2018, two state lawmakers proposed a bill to protect the Constitutional rights of state residents. Its primary purpose was to limit the ICE actions in hospitals and other settings once considered to be safe from immigration enforcement. What is the best argument for this bill? What would be the best argument against it?
2. Many cultures believe in the concept of soul loss, which can occur in several different ways and is associated with evil spirits. If you had a Vietnamese client who says that they are suffering from soul loss, what would you say? For example, would you try to label the condition by using the DSM-5 manual? What would be a culturally competent approach?
3. Flora, an 84-year-old Russian immigrant with end-stage renal disease, is in the hospital. The social worker is trying to place her in a nursing home because Flora's daughter is unable to care for her at home. The daughter insists on one particular facility because the Russian community recommends it, but Flora wants to be placed in another one. If you were the social worker, what cultural aspects of this situation should you consider before you meet with Flora and her daughter?
4. In a participatory community-based study, focus groups of rural Latino immigrants contributed to a needs assessment. Besides identifying transportation and language barriers, the respondents shared their thoughts about discrimination: "In some clinics and health care centers, they make us Latinos wait too long. It is common to wait for two or three hours to get assistance and the situation is worse if you don't have health insurance. It is evident that they prefer Americans" (Cristancho et al., 2008, pp. 262-263). If you were a social worker for these clients, how would you advocate for them?
5. An outbreak of a highly contagious disease has occurred in a neighborhood largely inhabited by a certain immigrant group. This has led to some anti-immigrant feelings in the city. Using the advocacy model, develop an advocacy effort to decrease the tensions and improve access to care for the immigrant group.
6. Find a local event that involves an immigrant or refugee group. If you had to plan a coalition to start an outreach at this event, which parties would you contact? How would you approach them—networking, phone, email, or social media? How could you find out who the community leaders are for that group?

7. In one study, West African mothers “said that certainly parents and children can contribute to health and illness but “ultimately it is God who decides.” Regarding illness etiology, one parent eloquently offered, that ‘there is a difference between something natural like fire and snow. Some illnesses are natural and some can be prevented” (Vaughn & Hollway, 2010, p. 32). If you were the social worker working with West African immigrants, how would you respond to these comments? Do you have any common ground with these mothers’ beliefs or are they completely different from your own beliefs about illness?

8. In one study, a group of East African women told the researcher that they were developing health problems due to gaining weight since their arrival in the U.S. "At home they used to walk everywhere, visit with each other in their neighborhoods, herd cattle, farm, eat fresh vegetables and drink fresh milk from their camels. Here, they fear crime, they do not like the cold during the winter, they talk on the telephone, they stay home” (Shipp, et al., 2014, p. 20). Design a health education program for this population. Would you use peer educators or another method? What would be the best way to link their culture to changing their exercise and eating habits?

Chapter 7: Mental Health¹

Please respond to TWO of the following questions:

1. Have you ever experienced culture shock when you encountered or entered a new culture? What was the experience like?
2. An immigrant family has an adolescent son who is showing signs of mental illness. They are ashamed of their son and hide his problem to avoid stigma. They view it as a curse or punishment from God. How would you use cultural competence to address their concerns and educate them about the Western view of mental illness? (Adapted from Wood & Newbold, 2012).
3. A study of Korean older adults in California posits that two reasons for their depression is their limited English proficiency and their lack of acculturation despite years of residence in the U.S. If you were the social worker for a recently arrived family that brought along an older relative, how would you be proactive in addressing these risk factors for depression? (Lee & Yoon, 2011).
4. As a social worker, you have a client who is on the verge of being evicted every month. Each month, he asks your agency for help. When you sit down to develop a budget with him, you find that he is sending a significant portion of his income to his parents back home. He insists that he has to send the money every month because they sacrificed to send him to the U.S., and they depend on him financially. How would you handle this situation?
5. In a study of Cambodian refugees, most had lost a loved one and witnessed atrocities. Life in work camps in their native country was especially harsh and brutal. After living in refugee camps for years, they finally arrived the U.S. If you were the social worker, how would you help them to understand how PTSD could affect them? (Blair, 2000).
6. In a Mexican immigrant neighborhood in Chicago, community activists were proud of their work. One self-described “powerhouse” said, “Here everybody goes all out...we all kind of work together closely, so it makes it so much easier...Yes, we do have issues in our neighborhood, but we do have people fighting for it, right?” (Hebert-Beirne, et al., 2018, p. 6). If you were developing a mental health outreach

program for Mexican immigrants, how would you approach this activist as a potential community partner?

7. A college student living with her traditional family tells her counselor that her parents are telling her which classes to take, besides imposing a curfew on her. The counselor is shocked and says, "That's terrible! You need to stand up for yourself! You aren't a teenager they can boss around!" What could be a more appropriate response from the counselor?

Chapter 8: Family Dynamics

Please complete the following sentences:

1. Now that I've read this chapter, I want to learn more about ____ because ____
2. I used to think _____, but after reading this chapter I know _____.

Chapter 9: Language, Education, and Economic Well-Being

1. What was most surprising, intriguing, or challenging to you about this chapter?
2. How do the concepts in this chapter relate to other things you're learning in and out of the classroom?

Chapter 10: Intergroup Relations

1. Does the content in the book affect your life? How?
2. Of the information you learned in this chapter, what would you like to share with someone else? Whom would you share it with and why?

Chapter 11: Additional Populations of Concern

1. Which of the additional populations discussed in this chapter (unaccompanied and separated children, older adult immigrants, queer migrants, and international victims of human trafficking) is of greatest concern for you? Why? What is one action you could take today to help this population?
2. Are there other special populations that you would have liked to see included in this chapter? Why?

Chapter 12: Summary and Conclusions

1. What did you learn from this course? What will you take from this course moving forward?
2. What are the next steps for you after taking this course? What would you like to do, read, or learn more about?

References

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