COMMUNITY-BASED ADVOCACY

Ashley is a medical social worker who coordinates home health care services for older adults. Also, she works as a consultant to an Area on Aging Council, which attempts to coordinate an array of interprofessional services for consumers and their families. On a daily basis, Ashley sees firsthand the needs of consumers and the commitment of family and friends to care for older people in need of medical attention. Such medical needs range from monitoring of vital signs like heart rate and blood pressure to advanced interventions associated with cancer. Most care providers have no or limited medical training and few resources to support an often rigorous routine of medical care.

Over time, Ashley begins to document the everyday and medical needs of consumers and their care providers. She organizes her documentation into three broad categories: *basic*, which involves monitoring and medication distribution; *intermediate*, which comprises more physical care like lifting, positioning, ambulation, and feeding; and *advanced*, which necessitates medical apparatus and equipment, injections, and multiple medications. Many forms of service delivery involve a variety of activities and a diversity of skills associated with advocacy. Thus, one of the features of this book is that it describes advocacy as a major feature in all social work practice, including macro practice involving program, policy, and personnel development.

WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

People have the right to control their lives, but sometimes life circumstances (e.g., financial hardship, health-care issues, lack of employment, or social attitudes) minimize their ability to exercise free choice or represent personal interests in a meaningful way. It is often in these circumstances that social workers’ advocacy can enhance an individual’s right to be heard and create spaces where views, wishes, and needs are respected and acted upon.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. Define the term *advocacy* in the context of macro practice
2. Discuss ethical principles and standards in relation to advocacy
3. Describe the connection between advocacy and macro practice
4. Define the advocacy practice and policy model (APPM)
5. Understand the theoretical foundations of the APPM
6. Describe how the APPM applies to macro social work practice
Advocacy involves effectively communicating with people possessing power and privilege over a particular condition or situation, so that decisions can empower and strengthen consumers rather than worsening circumstances. Restated, advocacy is taking action to assist people, groups, and communities to effectively promote their wants, secure rights, represent interests, and obtain services. Table 4.1 lists skills and traits that are often used in advocacy action to promote dignity, security, social inclusion, and equality by shifting the balance of power.

The goal of advocacy is not merely to represent the views of another but also to enable people to speak and act for themselves. Advocacy in all of its forms helps ensure that people, particularly those who are most vulnerable in society, are able to

- Have their voice heard on issues that are important to them
- Defend and safeguard their rights
- Have their views and wishes genuinely considered when decisions are being made about their lives

Advocacy is a process of supporting and enabling people to

- Express their views and concerns
- Access information and services
- Defend and promote their rights and responsibilities
- Explore choices and options

**TABLE 4.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important Advocacy Skills and Traits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying decision makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Paraphrased from Schneider and Lester (2001).
Refer to the opening case. Consider Ashley’s professional knowledge and skill base and how she uses both practice and policy to enhance the quality of life for people in their community. When considering the medical nature of her work and interprofessional practice, how might nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and other health-care professionals be embraced and included in Ashley’s effort? In your own life, how has the quality and efficacy of a service(s) affected not only your life but also the lives of those around you?

Advocacy involves a number of activities, most of which consist of ways of “getting involved” with developing or changing policies, legislation, practices, personnel, projects, and programs through education, negotiation, and persuasion (Hoefer, 2012). Specific tasks include working with politicians, legislatures, and agencies for policy development; seeking changes through involvement with legal systems (e.g., courts and law officials); educating and influencing major stakeholders (e.g., politicians and public officials); using media to inform and sway public opinion; and promoting change through demonstrations, boycotts, and protest (Walker, 1991).

It is important to consider several interrelated themes when examining advocacy’s essential features. The first is the relationship between advocacy and social justice. Social justice is conceptualized by social workers in various ways ranging from a utilitarian perspective, which weighs benefits and harms to determine the greatest good for the largest numbers of people, to the idea of egalitarianism, which advances the notion of avoiding extreme inequalities in order to create a just society (Garcia & Van Sorest, 2006). In this book, we apply a human rights approach to social justice, whereby basic human needs are met, without discrimination, through the equitable sharing of resources (Garcia & Van Sorest, 2006).

Advocacy from a social justice perspective supports a sense of empowerment where relatively powerless individuals or groups, regardless of their race, gender, or class, gain support to influence or challenge the more powerful elements in society. Consequently, advocacy plays a significant role in enhancing consumers’ sense of autonomy to advance and make changes in their world, both individually and structurally. The intersections of advocacy, empowerment, and social justice are evident when consumers speak and promote causes and issues for themselves. Thus, the intent and outcome of advocacy is to promote power, instill confidence and dignity, and advance choices in life’s conditions.

Social work advocacy also intersects with a sense of empowerment. With empowerment as a theme in advocacy, social workers ensure consumers are as mindful, active, and present in decisions about and for them. Empowerment can be accomplished as social workers

- Promote, model, and deliver self-advocacy tools/examples
- Encourage supportive decision making to ensure that consumers are intrinsically involved in the actions that affect their lives
• Design or select methods of advocacy action in which consumers offer feedback and guidance to ensure they have a say in their own lives and become enabled to access relevant services

• Record, applaud, and celebrate the outcomes achieved by consumers

• Identify ways for consumers to become involved in research, civic, governmental, and political processes influencing decision making

Another theme present in advocacy is the recognition of the existing strengths of consumers. Here the goal of advocacy is not merely to represent the views of another but also to enable consumers to use and develop abilities, skills, and active voices to seek important rights and confront inequalities. In this way, advocacy expands the participation of consumers in the development and implementation of various strategies (e.g., involving policies, programs, projects, politics, and personnel) to best address needs and reshape existing practices and institutions.

Time to Think 4.2

Take a moment to list your strengths and those of a community familiar to you. What quickly comes to mind and why? Have you used your personal and community strengths to enhance the quality of your life and that of others? If so, how? Identify strengths you like to enhance or build upon as a result of attending college in relationship to large-scale, macro-level change?

ADVOCACY AND ETHICS

Like many professions, social work follows a Code of Ethics that guides professional conduct with consumers of services. The Code comprises four sections: The “Preamble” summarizes the profession’s mission and values, the “Purpose of the Code of Ethics” introduces an overview of the Code’s primary functions and provides a guide to deliberate ethical dilemmas, “Ethical Principles” integrates social work’s values with ethical principles, and “Ethical Standards” states specific ethical standards that guide social work practice (National Association of Social Workers, 2018).

As seen in Table 4.2, ethical principles form the foundation of social work values as seen in practice and policy. The ethical principle of social justice underpins advocacy action by social workers as does the principle on dignity and worth of the person.
Advocacy is very much a part of the ethical standards to the profession of social work. As stated in the *Code of Ethics*, social work activities must demonstrate ethical responsibilities to consumers, colleagues, in practice settings, as professionals, and to the broader society (National Association of Social Workers, 2018).

### TABLE 4.2
The Ethical Principles of Social Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Ethical Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service</strong></td>
<td>Social workers’ primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.</td>
<td>Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest. Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems. Social workers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social justice</strong></td>
<td>Social workers challenge social injustice. Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people.</td>
<td>Social workers’ social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dignity and worth of the person</strong></td>
<td>Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.</td>
<td>Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients’ socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients’ capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients’ interests and the broader society’s interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Importance of human relationships</strong></td>
<td>Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.</td>
<td>Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of particular relevance to advocacy action are the following two standards taken from the Code of Ethics: Both standards highlight their role and responsibilities of social workers to maintain their ethical positions in practice and policy.

6. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Broader Society

6.01 Social Welfare Social workers should promote the general welfare of society, from local to global levels, and the development of people, their communities, and their environments. Social workers should advocate for living conditions conducive to the fulfillment of basic human needs and should promote social, economic, political, and cultural values and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social justice.

6.04 Social and Political Action

(a) Social workers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully. Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice.

(b) Social workers should act to expand choice and opportunity for all people, with special regard for vulnerable, disadvantaged, oppressed, and exploited people and groups.

(c) Social workers should promote conditions that encourage respect for cultural and social diversity within the United States and globally. Social workers should promote policies and practices that demonstrate respect for difference, support the expansion of cultural knowledge.
and resources, advocate for programs and institutions that demonstrate cultural competence, and promote policies that safeguard the rights of and confirm equity and social justice for all people.

(d) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical ability.

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What can be gained from reviewing the excerpts from the Code of Ethics on advocacy, and its connection to social justice, is the profession’s obligation to practice advocacy with consumers, not for, and regardless of an employment setting. Advocacy is identified and supported as a critical professional role for social workers and transcends types of services and programs and population groups served.

**Time to Think 4.3**

In the context of social work, an ethical dilemma is a situation in which two or more professionally identified values are in conflict. For example, a consumer wants to give a social worker a gift for services received or an agency administrator wants the social worker to discuss what was said in a staff meeting. When faced with an ethical dilemma, social workers turn to the profession’s Code of Ethics. Please give thought to an ethical dilemma you might confront when advocating with consumers for macro-level change and how you could resolve the situation. What values and principles did you rely on to guide your actions?

Strategies associated with advocacy have expanded over the past decade with the increased use of social media. Specifically, electronic advocacy constitutes an aspect of advocacy action for examination and consideration in relationship to ethical principles and standards. Referred to as online advocacy or cyber activism, advanced communication tools are used to expand the reach and speed that social workers can connect with consumers (Delany, 2006). Queiro–Tajallil, Campbell, and McNutt (2003, pp. 154–156) identified four elements of electronic advocacy:

1. Issue research: Access to information is significantly enhanced through the Internet. This access is vital to informing consumers and colleagues of educational material, research findings, political issues, and resources.
2. Information dissemination and awareness: Websites, blogs, YouTube, Twitter, and other platforms allow individuals, groups, and communities
to communicate quickly in an ongoing manner. Advocates can use these communication devices to inform, educate, and evaluate.

3. Coordination and organizing: Individuals, groups, communities, and organizations use electronic advocacy to rally and inform their supporters. Such communication is rapid, is cost-effective, and allows for tracking messages.

4. Influence: Electronic advocacy can be used to place pressure on those in power by writing letters of support or opposition, comment on particular issues, and engage in other forms of opinion sharing by weighing in on the decision-making process.

The intersection of advocacy and ethics supports the use of high-speed technology to explore and examine the interrelationship of consumers’ needs, the ethical obligations of the profession, and possibility of rallying people for macro-level change. With a keen interest in advocacy and keeping ethics in mind, social work students and professionals can use technology to seek new and innovative ways and practices for being change agents.

**ADVOCACY AND MACRO PRACTICE**

By now it should be understood that social work integrates values, ethics, empowerment, and advocacy to promote change across systems small and large. Also integral to all social work practice is the engagement with human processes and relationships to alter conditions for the improved well-being of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. In this way, problems and their solutions are viewed from a holistic rather than a fragmented perspective.

This book does not support the longstanding divide between micro and macro social work practice. Rather, practice is viewed as a unified pattern of interventions that integrates community and societal concerns with human and social development (Netting et al., 2016). This is not to minimize defined roles, career paths, and specializations in social work but is meant to suggest that to understand people and their life conditions in their environment requires a continuum of methods that span the micro and macro skill base. Thus, when speaking of macro practice, the importance of micro practice philosophies and methods is not to be minimized but rather viewed as a component of the preparation needed for effective macro practice (Pritzker & Applewhite, 2015).

How does the relationship between micro and macro practice affect advocacy? To answer this question, in professional development, consider the need
to develop alternative helping strategies embracing multiple system sizes, collect evidence at multiple level sizes, understand power (e.g., power bases and dynamics), take well-thought-out risks, and be persistent with consumers of services and their causes.

**Develop Alternative Strategies**

Macro practice necessitates a comprehensive assessment of the current state of a problem or condition in which assumptions are tested. Reamer (1993, p. 2) identified five reasons in which assumptions may vary: (1) the goals of the government, (2) the rights of citizens in relation to the state, (3) the obligation of the state to its citizens, (4) the nature of political or civil liberty, and (5) the nature of social justice (Netting, 2005). For social workers, assessment of assumptions leads to an analysis of divergent views and the possibilities of alternatives while entertaining the importance of various systems (e.g., individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and society). As an example, consider the persistent problem of hunger in the United States. To develop alternatives to national hunger, assumptions about the goals of government and the obligation to citizens must be assessed to better understand the root of the problem. It is through this multilevel, complex assessment of viewpoints that alternatives to hunger can be identified and described along with a sense of the support and opposition to any advocacy change effort.

Through the assessment of a problem and a critical review of alternatives, a vision or a new perspective can emerge. Working with consumers to identify the “what if . . .” enhances a social worker’s ability to communicate not only the proposed change but also the advocacy strategies to drive the change.

**Collect Evidence**

For a social worker to advocate for change, there needs to be evidence that a problem exists, accompanied by evidence that the proposed change has merit. In both cases, evidence is needed. According to the National Association of Social Workers (2018), evidence-based practice is a process where the best evidence available is used to answer a question pertaining to an individual, family, group, community, or organization. In order for evidence-based practice to occur, there must be research findings based on well-researched interventions. Table 4.3 offers a process that evaluates the change effort based on the information collected from consumers. Consumer participation in research endeavors adds the potential for consumer empowerment and the active use of consumer voices in various research questions and decisions.

In terms of advocacy action, social workers must consider the extent to which the evidence-based strategies or interventions are adoptable and adaptable for a particular situation. This requires not only research and critical thinking skills but also a keen sense of anticipated and unanticipated consequences. For example, research findings frequently lack generalizability when considering the population group served and settings.
### Table 4.3
Evidence-Based Macro Practice Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Convert information needs into a relevant question for practice in a community and/or organizational context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Track down with maximum efficiency the best evidence to answer a question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Critically appraise the evidence for its validity and usefulness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Provide clients with appropriate information about the efficacy of different interventions and collaborate with them in making the final decision in selecting the best practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>Apply the results of this appraisal in making policy/practice decisions that affect organizational and/or community change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 6</td>
<td>Assess the fidelity implementation of the macro practice intervention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 7</td>
<td>Evaluate service outcomes from implementing the best practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Hoefer and Jordan (2008).

### Understand Power

Social workers must recognize that no matter what consumer group they are working with, the influence of power and politics is inevitable. To effectively advocate in any format, workers must understand social and political power and develop skills to analyze power sources and dynamics. Attributes of power include self-interest, possession of resources (e.g., money, wealth, and technology), influence, and the ability to impose value orientations on others. It is important to recognize that in many social contexts (e.g., organizations, communities, and societies), power is aligned with factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and religion, which serve to privilege or disadvantage various individuals and groups of people. However, with ethical principles and standards in mind and the use of analytical thinking, it is often possible to embrace politics and seek ways to effectively influence power brokers for the greater good of consumers of services.

Adapted from the work of Jansson (1998), the following list reflects the nature of power relationships.

- **Distribution of Power Relationships**
  - What persons, interests, and factions are likely to participate in certain policy deliberations?
  - What are their power resources?
  - What are their likely positions on a proposal?
  - How strongly do they hold these positions?

- **Political Stakes in an Issue**
  - What political benefits and risks will I encounter if I participate in certain policy deliberations?
  - Should I be a leader, a follower, or a bystander?
• Political Feasibility
  o What patterns of opposition and support are likely to be associated with specific policy options?
  o Which position, on balance, should I support?

• Political Strategy
  o What power resources do I (or my allies) currently have that are relevant to these deliberations?
  o What power resources might I (or my allies) develop that will be relevant to these deliberations?
  o What strategies will we use as the deliberations proceed?

• Revising Strategy
  o How should I change my strategy in light of evolving political realities, including my opponents’ likely moves?
  o As the political realities changes, how should my role change?

What emerges from the model is that political decisions are usually shaped in a give-and-take manner that highlights deliberations, the scope of the conflict, and the influence of affiliations. Conflicts occur in a context or setting and are influenced by the prevailing power structure (key groups of people and individuals). For example, the context of an organization could be its rural location where new ideas and people new to the organization are initially met with suspicion. An affiliation is often represented by membership in a political party, association, or a recognized group.

Whatever the composition of the power base, social workers need to avoid attacking the character, ideology, assumptions, and motivations of the opponents. Rather, successful advocacy is often attributed to personal credibility, persistence, and willingness to compromise. What seems to be clear is that negotiating political power does not always conform to a formulaic strategy or approach. Layers of potential support along with barriers to change intersect and call for adroit advocacy and negotiating strategies if a substantive redistribution of power is to occur.

Take a Risk

It seems that an appreciable portion of social work involves taking a risk of some sort. For instance, it may be that a social worker advocates for employment opportunities with teenagers knowing that there will be backlash from unemployed adults. It could be that an agency is having administrative problems and people are hesitant to speak out because of possible employment and/or salary repercussions. Nevertheless, the agency social worker assists with the research and compiles a list of concerns for the administration. Such examples of risk taking are certainly chancy but at times unavoidable.

When a risk is taken, social workers are usually able to forecast an anticipated consequence of possible consequences from the selected intervention, but at times the end result can be a surprise to all involved. Given the resources of time and
energy, social workers must consider the cost and benefits to any advocacy action taken, especially actions and effort that come with considerable physical, psychological, social, and economic consequences.

There are advantages to some risk taking. New partnerships and coalitions can form, and successful advocacy in one instance can provide evidence for the development of another advocacy action. Throughout the risk-taking assessment, the social worker must keep the consumers closely informed and aligned. Much as with micro-level practice, consumers of services need to exert client self-determination. Risk taking should not enhance the status or cause(s) of the social worker but rather reflect the needs and wants of consumers.

**Persistence**

Understanding the dynamics of individuals, groups, communities, and organizations involves maintaining a persistently questioning eye. Appreciating the components of life, including norms, values, attitudes, strengths, and areas to improvement, takes not only time but also reflection and ongoing communication with others (e.g., consumers, colleagues, and supervisors). As might be expected, it is essential to keep recognizing and confronting ill-conceived and shortsighted notions and biases before moving forward on any advocacy action.

Persistence, with a long-term vision of change, is seen as essential to advocacy but is not always a component of all forms of social work practice. Specifically, when working with a consumer in an agency setting, social workers are usually required to follow a timetable associated with delivering billable services. Usually the timetable follows a linear approach, whereby an intake form is completed, a bio-psycho-social history is collected and written, a service plan for treatment is designed, and a number of sessions are scheduled with the social worker, as determined by some sort of insurance or government payment plan.

In comparison to a linear plan of intervention, macro advocacy action can be more fluid and require significant flexibility on the part of social workers, consumers, and agency expectations. These challenges point to the need for more persistence by all involved, especially the social worker and consumers. Undoubtedly when integrating macro advocacy into practice, researching and documenting best practices and effective advocacy actions is necessary when examining persistence and relationship building with stakeholders.

**Time to Think 4.4**

List at least three ways in which developing alternative strategies, collecting evidence, understanding power, taking a risk, or persistence can cut across and/or bridge micro and macro social work. Describe a situation in which social workers can be called upon to attend to the immediate needs of a consumer, but they are also involved in organizing and building systems to prevent the needs from occurring again.
The Advocacy Practice and Policy Model (APPM)

Advocacy in social work practice involves activities to “defend, represent, or otherwise advance the cause of one or more clients at the individual, group, organizational, or community level in order to promote social justice” (Hoefer, 2012, p. 3). Advocating for social justice is a complex process, containing a number of key elements for consideration. Cox, Tice, and Long (2019), as seen in Figure 4.1, offer and describe a dynamic advocacy model that identifies four interlocking tenets (economic and social justice, supportive environment, human needs and rights, and political access) as factors for reflection when advocating for change. It is noted that “in social work practice with real people and situations, these tenets have considerable overlap with and influence on one another” (Cox et al., 2019, p. 69). Although not exhaustive, the advocacy model and its tenets are offered “to prompt critical and multidimensional thought and discussion about advocacy in social work practice” (Cox et al., 2019, p. 69).

A succinct description of the four tenets of the dynamic advocacy model is provided in Table 4.4.

What is important when reviewing the advocacy practice and policy model (APPM) is that the four tenets are not meant to be identified as distinctive or independent from one another. Rather, the tenets overlap and inform, as well as influence one another, when placed in the context of consumers. Thus, the model is designed to encourage critical and intersectional thought, discussion, and action related to practice and policy advocacy.

**Figure 4.1**

Theoretical Framework for the Advocacy Practice and Policy Model

Source: Cox, Tice, and Long (2019).
**TABLE 4.4**  
The Four Tenets of the Advocacy Practice and Policy Model (APPM)

| Economic and social justice                                      | Emphasis is placed on advancing economic and social rights for all people. These efforts are often actualized through the development and establishment of liberties, rights, duties, access, opportunities, and the active voices of people in specific domains (e.g., education, employment, housing, religion, voting, safety, citizenship, and marriage). |
| Supportive environment                                           | Examination of the total social, economic, and physical (natural) environment takes place and is aligned with the aforementioned systems and the ecological and person-in-the-environment perspectives. A supportive environment for advocacy can be derived from significant others, friends, family members, churches, companies, associations, community entities, and community and national groups and organizations. Natural and tangible aspects of the environment are also important considerations; these could include factors such as buildings, use of land, monetary support, water, food, computer access, technology, and so on. |
| Human needs and rights                                           | Special consideration in advocacy needs to be given to who is defining human needs and why. Implicit in the definition of human needs and rights is power. How should and can consumers of services be involved in defining human needs and rights? The active participation of consumers of services in defining human needs and rights is highly aligned with the notion of empowerment and the ability of consumers to influence and affect decision-making processes. |
| Political access                                                 | Who has access to political power and why? Identifying key stakeholders and their influence over policy and legislative development is crucial. Politicians are responsible to the public and their constituency but often beholden to the people and political parties who significantly donated to the campaign fund and assisted with their election. Political access typically involves the building of relationships with politicians, elected officials, and key stakeholders. McBeath (2016, p. 9) identifies “developing external advocacy networks” (e.g., between professional, public, businesses, nonprofit, and private entities) as a top strategy for reenvisioning macro social work practice. |

The APPM indicates that justice is integral to social work policy and practice by “promoting and establishing equal liberties, rights, duties, and opportunities in the social institutions (economy, policy, family, religion, education, etc.) of a society for all [people]” (Long, Tice, & Morrison, 2006, p. 208; see also Cox et al., 2019, p. 69). Thus, the APPM fosters a “big picture perspective” of people in their environments that enables social workers to analyze issues outside of a box and focus not only on the amelioration of an issue but also, equally as important, its prevention (Reisch, 2016). The idea of purposeful change is a theme that runs throughout the APPM by encouraging collective and collaborative practice and policy development with consumers at the center of planned change.

**THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF THE ADVOCACY PRACTICE AND POLICY MODEL**

The theoretical foundation of the APPM includes systems and empowerment theory, the strengths perspective, and the ecological perspective. These theories
support the importance of considering both problems and strengths, as well as the encompassing nature of people and systems involved in advocacy—individuals (the micro level) and organizations, communities, and societies (the macro level) (Cox et al., 2019).

- **Systems theory:** In *systems theory*, advocacy takes place in systems of all sizes. Often an issue arises by way of an individual or group of consumers but is rooted in the very structure of a governmental, economic, or political system. An example is homelessness, which affects individuals on a daily basis but reflects the employment status, salary scales, the presence of affordable living, the housing market, and banking in relation to mortgages.

- **Empowerment theory:** It has already been stated in this chapter that social workers build relationships with consumers of various sizes. *Empowerment theory* gives voices to the needs and desires of consumers in such a way that the balance of power shifts and consumers recognize that they can be heard and far-reaching change can occur. Marriage equality reflects the empowerment of the gay community to realize their rights as citizens. The ramifications of marriage equality extend beyond a couple to a family, community, organizations, and local, state, and federal policy.

- **Strengths perspective:** This chapter highlights the importance of the *strengths perspective* when advocating with consumers. The APPM recognizes strengths across consumer systems as resources to support any change effort. An example of this is Wounded Warriors (www.woundedwarriorproject.org), an organization of veterans who have sustained injuries. They advocate from a strengths perspective by educating the public of their injuries while demonstrating their immeasurable ability to succeed in all phases of life, including work, leisure, and family life.

- **Ecological perspective:** The physical and natural environment are significant elements across consumer systems. The community where a person lives, the air, soil, trash, sewage, and parks in their community are but a few examples of the environment. Vulnerable communities, including those in both rural and urban areas, challenge the health and mental well-being of people. Given this, it makes sense that the APPM assumes a holistic perspective when assessing and advocating for change in the environment. Earthjustice (www.earthjustice.org) does just this. As a nonprofit advocacy group, Earthjustice uses an *ecological perspective* to advocate on the federal and international level for policies that protect the environment, including issues related to toxic cleanup, synthetic chemicals in baked goods, and the leaking of methane oil and gases.
The advocacy practice and policy model is a way of conceptualizing advocacy and the four tenets—economic and social justice, a supportive environment, human needs and rights, and political access—to ensure ethical and effective practice. An idea behind the model is that the tenets are dynamic and shift constantly; they are also interlocking because it is hard to define boundaries between the tenets. Can you think of an issue facing the nation where advocacy is needed and the APPM could be applied? What role would consumers play when implementing the model?

**Time to Think 4.5**

The advocacy practice and policy model is a way of conceptualizing advocacy and the four tenets—economic and social justice, a supportive environment, human needs and rights, and political access—to ensure ethical and effective practice. An idea behind the model is that the tenets are dynamic and shift constantly; they are also interlocking because it is hard to define boundaries between the tenets. Can you think of an issue facing the nation where advocacy is needed and the APPM could be applied? What role would consumers play when implementing the model?

**HOW THE APPM APPLIES TO MACRO PRACTICE**

The dichotomy of micro and macro practice historically imposed on social work knowledge can divide the profession’s content and skill application into discrete fragments. In response, the APPM suggests that both micro and macro knowledge and skills are essential to good social work outcomes and supports a bridge between the two. To promote a more unified approach, attention is given to the Association of Community Organization and Social Administration (ACOSA), a research, teaching, and practice organization that has attempted to understand and define the goals and competencies of macro social work through research, best practice identification, and effective teaching/learning strategies (Gamble, 2011). The overriding conclusion is that micro and macro practice reflect a commitment to values of the social work profession and share the profession’s respect for diversity in all forms as seen in social justice and human dignity and multisystem-level change.

With this in mind, Figure 4.2 illustrates the bridge between micro and macro practice used to advocate for consumers across systems.

The listed activities highlight that any change advocated by social workers is purposeful and planned and supported by knowledge and skills based on research and practice experience (Reisch, 2016). Understanding the dynamic nature of the tenets of the APPM is seen as an essential component of practice with every population and problem with which social work is involved. What the model implies is that participation of consumers in the identification of needs and desired advocacy outcomes is essential, as is the development and implementation of advocacy strategies and the ongoing evaluation of such strategies.

An example of an advocacy action that requires micro and macro skills and follows the tenets of the APPM is depicted in Table 4.5. The significance of
FIGURE 4.2
Advocacy Activities Related to the Advocacy Practice and Policy Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Micro Activities</th>
<th>Macro Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Educating consumer</td>
<td>- Organizing community meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Representing consumers at meetings and in court</td>
<td>- Conducting research and evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Documenting consumers’ needs and wants</td>
<td>- Advocating for policies/practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Integrating consumer input into action plans</td>
<td>- Advancing programs and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Offering consumers support to discuss plans and goals</td>
<td>- Meeting with elected officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Organizing events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Educating the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Facilitating social media postings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Reisch (2016).

TABLE 4.5
Visiting Legislators

- Develop and maintain a good working relationship directly with the legislators in a district.
- Always call ahead for an appointment and briefly explain the purpose of the meeting.
- Be on time and professionally dressed.
- Keep all comments to the point and limit any presentation/discussion to the time scheduled, unless the legislator extends the meeting.
- Use bill numbers and titles when possible.
- Tell the legislator why the issue is important to consumers in their district.
- When possible and appropriate, bring consumers of services to talk with the legislators.
- Ask the legislator for his or her position on the issue and how he or she will vote. If supportive, thank him or her for the support. If undecided or for removing funds for services, offer additional information on the issue.
- Always be courteous, even if the legislator disagrees with a particular position on the issue.
- Leave information for the legislator to review after the meeting.
- Thank the legislator for his or her time.
- Send a short letter thanking the legislator for the meeting.

Source: Adapted from National Association of Social Workers (2018).

This table is that it highlights the need for micro, relational skills to engage a legislator and the macro aspects of practice to connect and convey the needs and wants of consumers with a broad vision of change. Macro roles and functions for social workers have traditionally been conceptualized as the use of organizing,
planning, administering, and evaluating knowledge and skills for producing social change (Meenghan, Washington, & Ryan, 1982). The combination of micro and macro practice is seen in the presentation of a social issue; the communication of an initiative that aims to organize, plan, and assist people in their communities; the advocacy for and with a population; and the education of a power base for social change.

A face-to-face meeting with legislators is an excellent opportunity to discuss the relevant issues and policies and their impact on consumers, their family, and communities. The following guidelines may be helpful when visiting a legislator.

The overriding goal of the APPM is to support effective efforts that promote human rights, empowerment, and social justice; develop inclusiveness that respects diversity; and open an array of opportunities for the economic, social, political, and environmental well-being for all people.

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**SUMMARY**

The social work profession faces many national and international changes in an ever-changing world. Social workers are called upon to address these issues through advocacy action that bridges micro and macro practice across systems.

In this chapter, the advocacy model for practice and policy (APPM) is introduced as a model to guide social workers in a manner that combines micro and macro practice to bring about planned change. Throughout the chapter, social justice, empowerment, values, and ethics are discussed to highlight the foundation of social work. Special attention is given to organizations and asks workers to make the transition from thinking about interventions on the micro level to conceptualizing methods of enriching the life of organizations, communities, and society through macro interventions. One bridge between these practice areas is empowerment. In the larger context, the advocacy related to the empowerment process ensures that program design, policies, and organizational development promote consumer input, self-determination, power, and dignity.

**TOP 10 KEY CONCEPTS**

- advocacy practice and policy model (APPM) 87
- empowerment theory 89
- ethical dilemma 81
- ethical principles 78
- evidence-based practice 83
- online advocacy 81
- political power 84
- social justice 77
- systems theory 89
- theoretical foundation of the APPM 88
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Consider the advocacy action that occurs on your university or college campus. What issues are students, faculty, and staff addressing through advocacy action and why?

2. What does social justice mean to you based on your life experiences? What factors have influenced your definition of social justice and why?

3. Describe the importance of the concept of empowerment as it relates to your life as a university or college student. What does empowerment have to do with our sense of confidence?

4. Examine the tenets of the advocacy practice and policy model. Which tenet is easier for you to understand and which one is more abstract? Consider the reasons behind your answer.

5. Does online advocacy have appeal to you in terms of a strategy to initiate planned change? What ethical dilemmas are associated with this form of advocacy?

EXERCISES

1. As a social work student, what are your thoughts about the bridge between micro and macro practice? Ask at least two of your instructors, along with your field instructor, their opinion on the topic. What were your main takeaway points from the discussions? Were there any surprises?

2. Go online and review the website of a nonprofit advocacy group. What did you learn from the posted information that was of particular interest to you? Did the website offer you opportunities to join advocacy efforts? If so, consider why the efforts did or did not appeal to you.

3. In the chapter, attention is given to political action with regard to visiting a legislator. Who are your state and federal legislators and what political parties do they represent? Visit your legislators’ websites and read about their policy positions on various issues. Given what you learned, would you endorse their reelection? How does your answer reflect your values?

4. The Association of Community Organization and Social Administration (ACOSA) (http://www.acosa.org/) is mentioned in this chapter. Visit the organization’s website to learn of its mission and goals. Is ACOSA an organization you would join? Please explain your response.

5. Table 4.1 is related to social workers engaged in macro practice. Review the list in the context of your developing skill base and personal traits. What are your particular strengths and what areas would you like to improve as a social work student?

6. Everytown For Gun Safety (everytown.org) is an advocacy group in support of gun control and is composed of citizens and community-based organizations. Everytown advocates primarily through text messages and website updates. Visit the Everytown site. Consider what strategies Everytown uses to connect personal issues to public concerns. What ethical principles does Everytown embrace?
You might be surprised by the sheer number of advocacy groups recruiting volunteers and donations. Visit https://www.opensecrets.org/527s/types.php to view a list of such organizations and learn of their focus and goals.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) was mentioned throughout the chapter. Visit the NASW website at https://www.socialworkers.org/ to view the complete Code of Ethics and its relationship to all facets of social work practice.

Go to https://www.socialworkers.org/Advocacy/Social-Justice and learn how social work defines and advocates for social justice. Also, this site provides information on Social Work Talks, a podcast on social justice.

Lobbyists are paid advocates for a specific cause or issue. Visit https://lobbyingdisclosure.house.gov/register.html to learn how to register as a lobbyist and what the role of the lobbyist is in the political process.

The Carter Center, in partnership with Emory University, is committed to human rights, the alleviation of human suffering, the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and the enhancement of freedom and democracy. Visit the Carter Center's website at https://www.cartercenter.org/about/index.html to see how advocacy strategies are put into action.