

Sociology is the application of scientific principles and procedures to understand and solve the problems of social groups, organizations, and institutions. **Sociologists** study how people relate to each other and how groups influence individuals. Students who hold a bachelor's degree in sociology and have a desire to help other people should consider a paraprofessional position. **Paraprofessionals** are responsible for direct client contact as well as administrative duties. They are supervised by professional staff members and frequently deal directly with people who need assistance. They may interview clients to determine what type of services they need and explain how to obtain these services. Paraprofessionals work in **halfway houses, mental health centers, alcohol/drug treatment facilities, and social service agencies**, etc. An undergraduate degree in sociology provides students with a broad education that may be applied to a variety of career fields, including government, business, education, law, human services, criminal justice, and health care.

**Social Workers** help people function the best way they can in their environment, deal with their relationships, and solve personal and family problems. Social workers often see clients who face a life-threatening disease or a social problem. These problems may include inadequate housing, unemployment, lack of job skills, financial distress, serious illness or disability, substance abuse, unwanted pregnancy, or anti-social behavior. Social workers also assist families that have serious domestic conflicts, including those involving abuse.

**Clinical Social Workers** offer psychotherapy or counseling and a range of diagnostic services in public agencies, clinics, and private practice. **Child Welfare or Family Services Social Workers** may counsel children and youths who have difficulty adjusting socially, advise parents on how to care for disabled children, or arrange for homemaker services during a parent's illness. **Child or Adult Protective Services Social Workers** investigate reports of abuse and neglect, and intervene if necessary. **Mental Health Social Workers** provide services for persons with mental or emotional problems. **Healthcare Social Workers** help patients and their families cope with chronic, acute, or terminal illnesses and handle problems that may stand in the way of recovery or rehabilitation. **School Social Workers** diagnose students' problems and arrange needed services, counsel children in trouble, and help integrate disabled students into the general school population. **Substance Abuse Social Workers** counsel drug and alcohol abusers as they recover from their dependencies. **Criminal Justice Social Workers** make recommendations to courts; prepare pre-sentencing assessments; and provide services to prison inmates and their families.

### Transfer Information:

- A Bachelor's degree is entry-level into many of these professions and a Master's degree is required for some.

### Additional Information:

- National Association of Social Workers:  
[www.naswdc.org/profession/overview.asp](http://www.naswdc.org/profession/overview.asp)

