Social Work with Children

Micro, Mezzo, and Macro Practices

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3 PRACTICE AREAS of Social Work

MICRO
Working directly with individuals or families on everything from access to housing, healthcare, and social services to treating mental, behavioral, and emotional disorders.

MEZZO
Working with groups and organizations such as schools, businesses, neighborhoods, hospitals, nonprofits, and other small-scale communities.

MACRO
Working towards large-scale systematic change by crafting laws, petitioning governments for community funds, organizing activist groups, and molding social policy.

NASW Standards for Working with Adolescents

- 1. Knowledge of Adolescent Development

- 2. Assessment

- 3. Knowledge of Family Dynamics

- 4. Cultural Competence

- 5. Self-Empowerment of Adolescents

- 6. Understanding Adolescents' Needs

- 7. Multidisciplinary Case Consultation

- 8. Confidentiality 16 Standard

- 9. Work Environment

- 10. Advocacy

- 11. Policies for Effective Practice

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Grand Challenges for Social Work

Click on one of the challenges below for additional information

Individual and family well-being

› **Ensure healthy development for all youth**

› **Close the health gap**

› **Build healthy relationships to end violence**

› **Advance long and productive lives**

Stronger social fabric

› **Eradicate social isolation**

› **End homelessness**

› **Create social responses to a changing environment**

› **Harness technology for social good**

Just society

› **Promote smart decarceration**

› **Build financial capability for all**

› **Reduce extreme economic inequality**
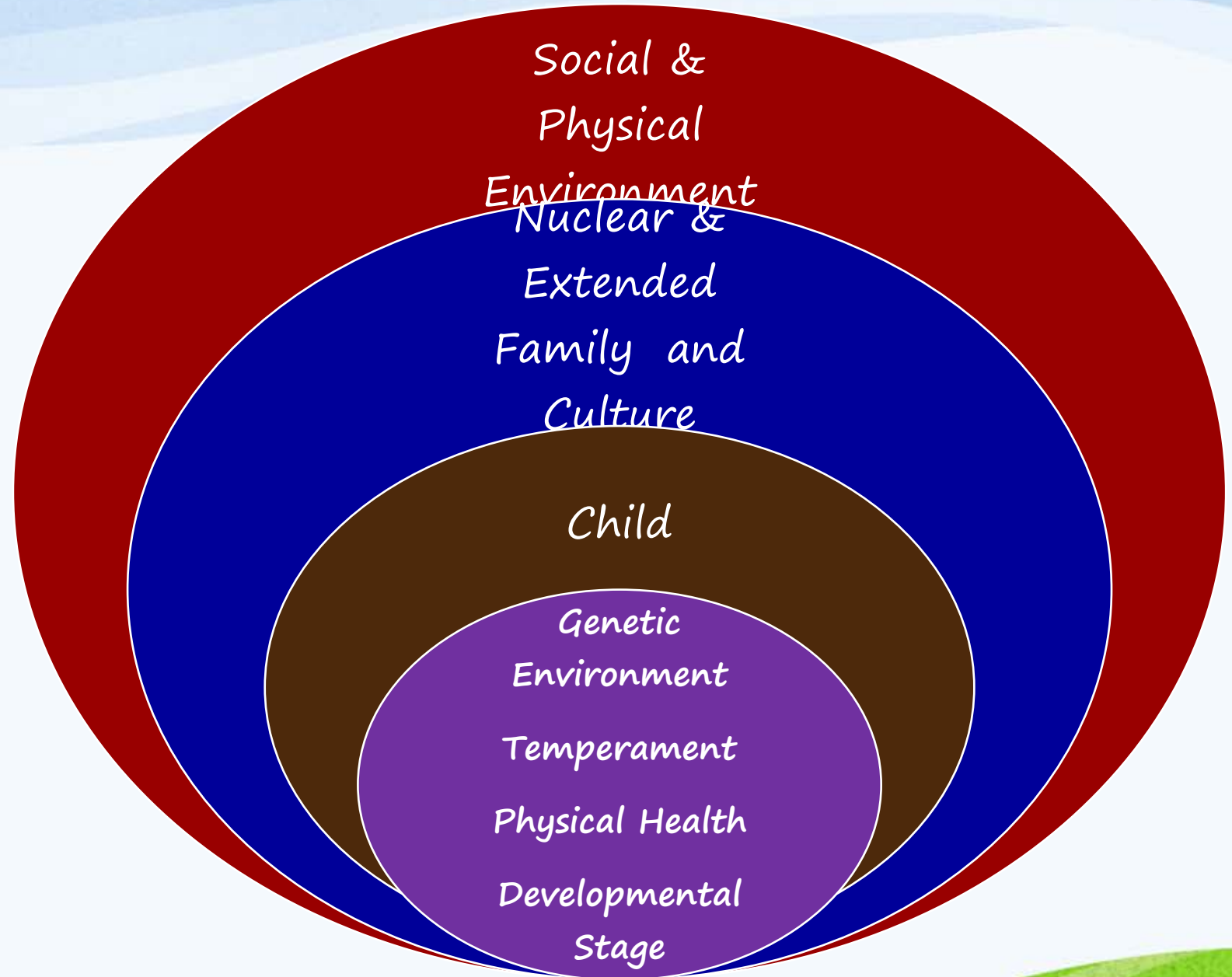
› **Achieve equal opportunity and justice**

Ecological-Transactional Focus

Emphasizes the interacting multi-systemic factors that contribute to children's mental, emotional, and behavioral difficulties including both familial and environmental influences.

Interactive Influences of Child, Family & Environment

Social & Physical Environment

Nuclear & Extended Family and Culture

Child

Genetic Environment

Temperament

Physical Health

Developmental Stage

Common Children's Challenges

Withdrawal or Social Problems

Attention or Thought Problems

Delinquency or Aggression

Anxiety & Depression

Initiating Relationships with Child Clients

- The social worker begins by explaining in child language the nature of the helping relationship.

- Explain reason for social worker's involvement.

- Avoid ADULTCENTRISM

ASSESS LANGUAGE

- Vocabulary

- Comprehension

- Memory

- Attention span

Remember, young children do not always have the words to tell you what has happened to them or how they feel. Behavior is a better gauge and sudden changes in behavior can be a sign of trauma exposure.
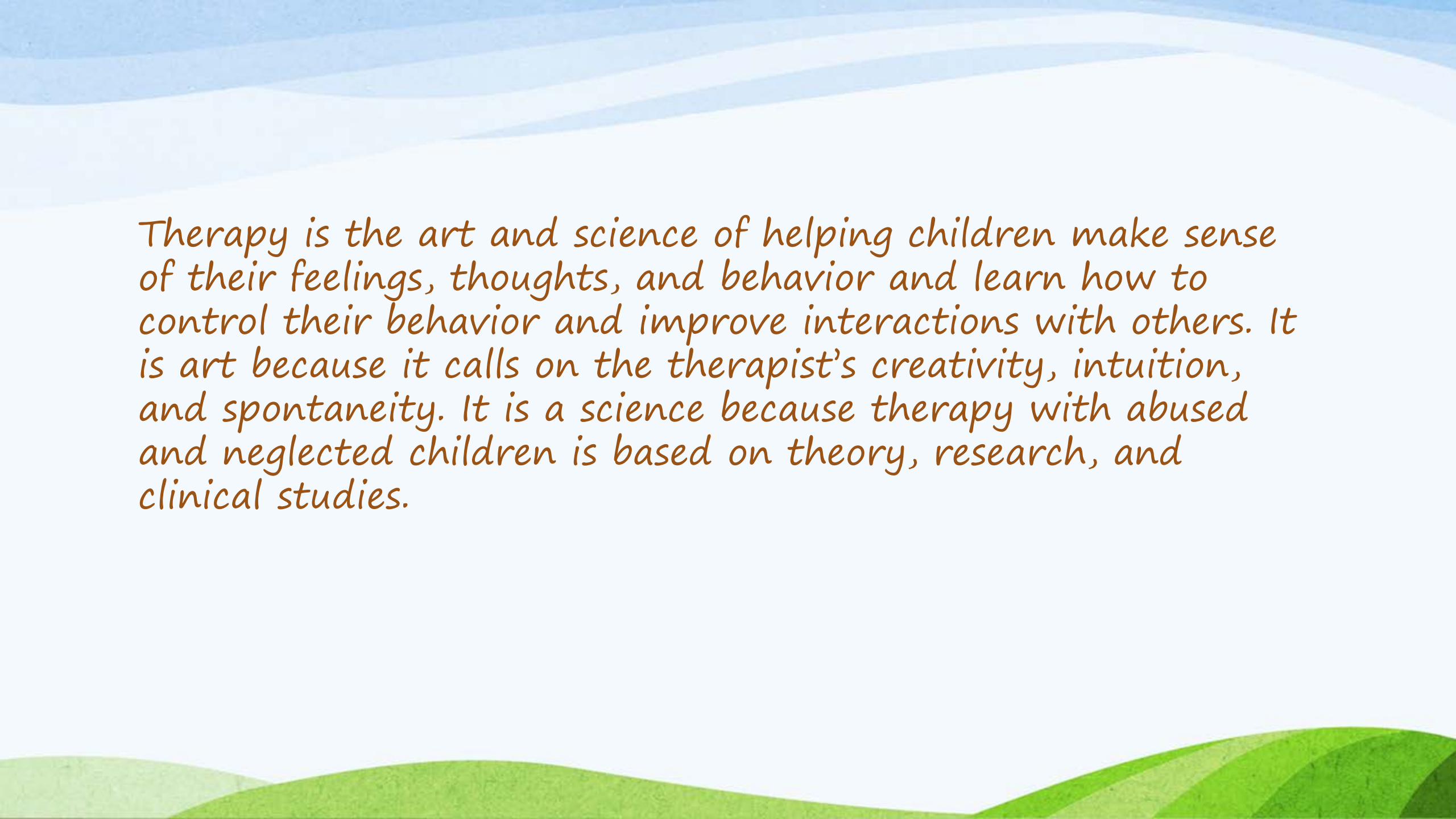
Micro Social Work Environments

- Private practice
- Community Mental health clinician
- Inpatient and outpatient treatment
- Clinical Assessments and Evaluations– biopsychosocials, adoptions, treatment, diagnoses

Therapy is the art and science of helping children make sense of their feelings, thoughts, and behavior and learn how to control their behavior and improve interactions with others. It is art because it calls on the therapist's creativity, intuition, and spontaneity. It is a science because therapy with abused and neglected children is based on theory, research, and clinical studies.

Guidelines for Age–Appropriate Interview Questions

Age	Who	What	Where	When	# of Times	Circumstance
3	🟥	🟥	⬜			
4 - 6	🟥	🟥	🟥	⬜		
7 - 8	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	⬜	
9 - 10	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	⬜
11 - 12	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥	🟥

CLIENTS' RIGHTS IN THERAPY

- Trust & Safety

- Abuse Free Environment

- Protection and Limit Setting

- Terminology and Communication

- Interventions

- Individuality

Role of the Therapist

- The therapist has an important role in helping a child recover. The therapist serves a number of functions, including:

  - helping the child address issues related to the presenting challenge,

  - serving as a model for appropriate adult/child relationships,

  - working to improve family relationships, and

  - supporting positive and productive peer relationships and support systems.

Common Theoretical Models with Children

Developmental theories

Interpersonal theories

Cognitive and behavioral theories

System theories

Child Clinical Measures & Child Development

As a child changes and adapts throughout his/her childhood, the manner in which he/she expresses dysfunctional or distressing behavior also changes. Therefore, the process of identifying psychopathology throughout childhood must be specific to the developmental status of the child. Thus, the therapist must possess a broad knowledge of child development (to understand normal and abnormal behavior throughout childhood). The therapist also needs to use assessment instruments that are sensitive to different age groups. Most published child clinical measures report age limitations for administration and clinical interpretation, and many offer age-specific scores.

Mezzo Social Work Environments

- Child welfare
- Juvenile detention
- School social work
- Community enrichment programs
- Organized group activities

Child Advocacy

Where there is a dearth of trauma-informed services, it may be important that children's advocates press the system to engage in capacity building.
- Working with court systems.
- Advocating for more child services even if the agency says they are not available.
- Organize local partners to take a leadership role in driving systems change.

Moreover, even those who advocate within child-directed, client-centered systems, the advocacy is not typically limited to a mere assertion of the child's expressed wishes.

9

Macro Social Work Environments

- Laws and policies
- Systems change initiatives
- Advocacy
- Social justice–disproportionality, poverty, education, immigration

Macro Issues

Socio-economic Status:

- Socioeconomic status (SES) encompasses not just income but also educational attainment, occupational prestige, and subjective perceptions of social status and social class. Socioeconomic status can encompass quality of life attributes as well as the opportunities and privileges afforded to people within society. Research indicates that SES is a key factor influencing quality of life, across the life span, for children, youth, and families (CYF).

  - Physical health
  - Psychological health
  - Education
  - Family Well-being

Resiliency

- Children who experience adversity but come out stronger.

- Social workers must consider both challenges and strengths when working with children.

Resources Utilized and Referenced During the Session

- Building Resilience in Foster Children: The Role of the Child's Advocate. Frank E. Vandervort, James Henry, Mark A. Sloane.

- Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators. October 2008, The National Child Traumatic Stress Network www.NCTSN.org

- The Deepest Well by Nadine Burke Harris

- Research by Charles Zeanah, Mary Dozier, Carol Schaffer, Nancy Boyd Franklin

- Documentary: Love Them First