

Therapist DEVELOPMENT Center



LMSW Exam Guide

With Sample Questions
& Rationales



Authors



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Amanda is the Founder of the Therapist Development Center. She used her background in the neuroscience of learning to develop TDC's innovative and highly effective study systems. She believes that by "studying smart," social workers can pass their exams and advance confidently in their careers.



Shelby Fontaine, LCSW

Shelby Fontaine is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in East Providence, Rhode Island. She received her bachelor's degree in sociology and anthropology from UMass Dartmouth in 2019 and her Master's in Social Work from Simmons University in Boston in 2021. Shelby passed her LMSW exam on the first try in October 2021 using TDC's LMSW exam prep. She found TDC's program to be well suited to help her succeed with its comprehensive content and guided support from coaches.

Professionally, Shelby is licensed in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island. While in grad school, she gained clinical experience interning at a psychiatric hospital and working as an in-home therapist for children on the autism spectrum. After graduating and gaining licensure, Shelby combined her graduate experiences by working with children with autism and developmental disabilities in a partial hospitalization program at Bradley Hospital in Rhode Island.

To learn more about Amanda and Shelby
visit www.therapistdevelopmentcenter.com/about-us



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About the SW Exams

Understanding the ASWB



- The ASWB has been developing social work licensing exams since 1979, and every state uses them as part of their licensure process. Their goal is to ensure “minimum practice competency”
- Your test will consist of 170 questions, 150 of which are scored. The number you need in order to pass varies, but it’s usually between 90 and 107 questions
- Different states refer to the exams and licensure levels differently, so make sure you know which test you should be taking in order to advance your career.

About the Clinical Exam (LCSW)

- Between 2011 and 2021, 76.1% of first-time test takers passed the Clinical Exam, with an eventual pass rate of 87.7%
- Approximately 85% of the questions on the Clinical Exam are reasoning-based
- The ASWB has the Clinical Exam content broken down into 4 categories:
 - Human Development, Diversity, and Behavior in the Environment
 - Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment Planning
 - Psychotherapy, Clinical Intervention, and Case Management
 - Professional Values and Ethics

About the Master’s Exam (LMSW)

- In 2021, 82.9% of first-time test takers passed the Master’s Exam
- Approximately 65% of the questions on the Master’s Exam are reasoning based
 - The ASWB has the Master’s Exam content broken down into 4 categories:
 - Human Development, Diversity, and Behavior in the Environment
 - Assessment and Intervention Planning
 - Interventions with Clients/Client Systems
 - Professional Relationships, Values, and Ethics

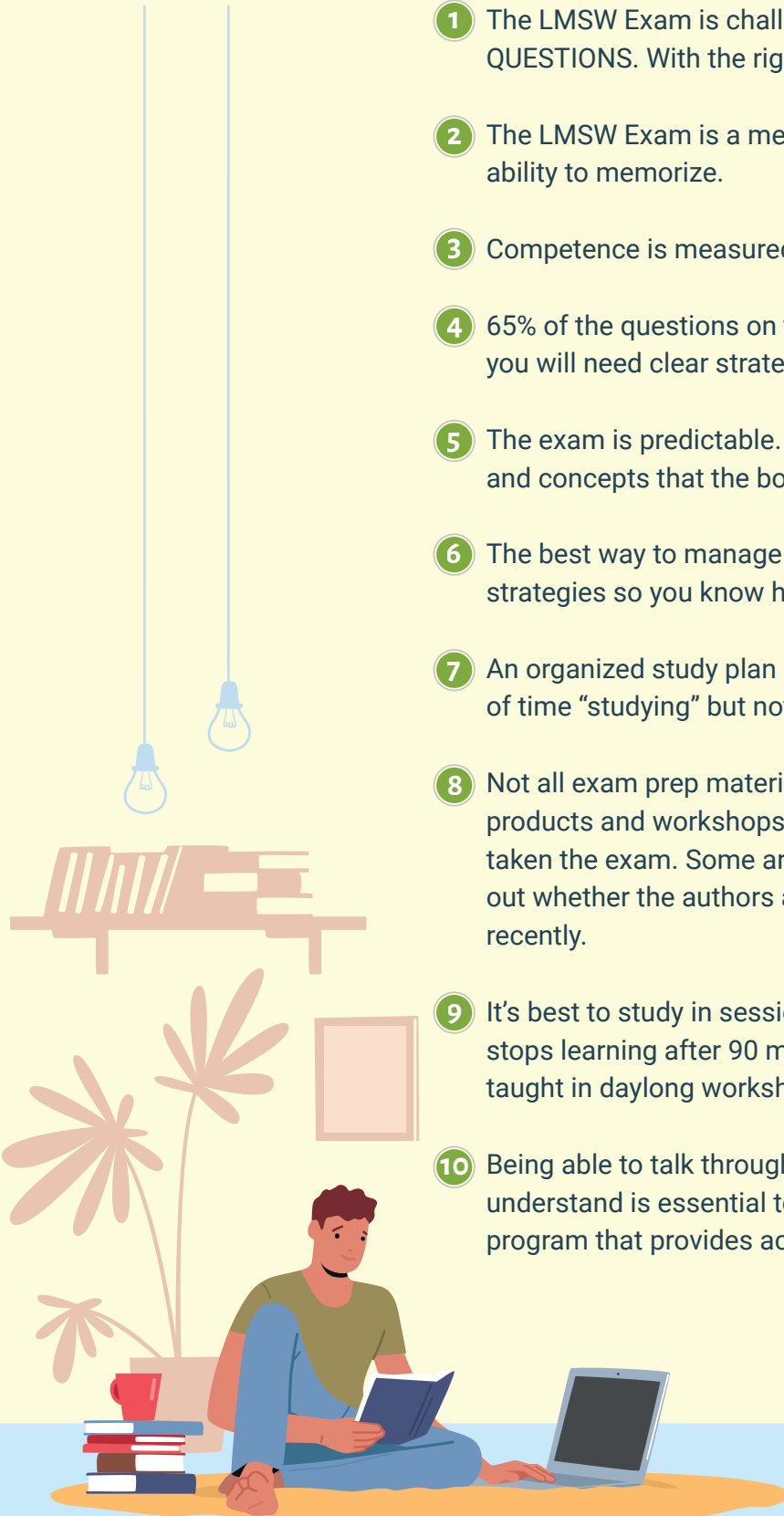


10 Study Tips

Finding Success on the LMSW Exam



- 1 The LMSW Exam is challenging, but there are NO TRICK QUESTIONS. With the right tools, you can pass with confidence.
- 2 The LMSW Exam is a measure of your competence, not just your ability to memorize.
- 3 Competence is measured through reasoning-based questions.
- 4 65% of the questions on the LMSW exam are reasoning-based, so you will need clear strategies to know how to figure out the answers.
- 5 The exam is predictable. There are certain clinical situations, terms and concepts that the board will want to be sure you know.
- 6 The best way to manage test anxiety is to have clear test taking strategies so you know how to take the exam.
- 7 An organized study plan is essential. Otherwise you can waste a lot of time “studying” but not actually “preparing to pass.”
- 8 Not all exam prep materials are created equally. In fact, most study products and workshops are created by people who have NEVER even taken the exam. Some aren’t even social workers. Be sure to find out whether the authors and instructors have taken the exam recently.
- 9 It’s best to study in sessions of 2 hours or less. The average person stops learning after 90 minutes, so you won’t learn most of what is taught in daylong workshops.
- 10 Being able to talk through concepts and rationales you don’t understand is essential to the learning process. Look for a study program that provides access to coaches who have taken the exam.



Practice Questions

Get a feel for the LMSW Exam



- 1 A social worker at a community counseling center meets with a 15-year-old girl and her mother for an initial assessment. During the assessment, the mother dominates the session telling the social worker that her daughter recently found out she is pregnant and she would like her to have an abortion. The girl remains silent throughout the session and when asked by the social worker what she wants she states, "I don't care." The social worker should FIRST:

 - A. Meet with the daughter individually to explore her feelings about the pregnancy.
 - B. Refer the mother and daughter to an abortion clinic.
 - C. Encourage the mother to address her feelings about her daughter's pregnancy.
 - D. Discuss various options with the mother and daughter.
- 2 A 30-year-old man who came out to his family as gay has been meeting with a social worker for the past 3-months. During sessions, the client states that when he is with his friends who are straight he feels the need to criticize and make fun of other gay men. Which of the following BEST describes the client's behavior?

 - A. Denial
 - B. Reaction Formation
 - C. Projection
- 3 A social worker has been struggling to maintain her client caseload after losing her mother to cancer. During a recent session, a client stated that it feels like the the social worker isn't focused on what she's saying. The social worker should FIRST:

 - A. Disclose the recent loss to the client.
 - B. Decrease her client caseload.
 - C. Take a leave of absence.
 - D. Consult with a supervisor.
- 4 A school social worker has developed an educational curriculum that addresses the risks of substance abuse and drug use to middle school classrooms. This is an example of:

 - A. Tertiary Prevention
 - B. Primary Prevention
 - C. Secondary Prevention
- 5 A social worker is meeting with a 25-year-old woman who was laid off from her job three months ago and since then has been struggling financially. The client also reports that her boyfriend of four years recently broke up with her after



Practice Questions

Get a feel for the LMSW Exam

cheating on her with another woman. The client reports increased feelings of hopelessness and states, "I don't know what the point is anymore." The social worker should FIRST:

- A. Assess the client for suicidal ideation.
- B. Refer the client to an employment agency.
- C. Explore the client's feelings surrounding losing her boyfriend.
- D. Develop a safety plan with the client.

6 A social worker meets with the parents of a 25-year-old man who is struggling with substance abuse. During the session the mother states that she is frustrated with her husband because he is constantly allowing their son to live in their home and gives him money since he has been unable to keep a job due to his drinking. Which of the following BEST describes the father's behavior?

- A. Enabling
- B. Triangulation
- C. Encouraging self-determination
- D. Manipulative behavior

7 A social worker facilitates a group for women who are survivors of childhood sexual abuse. During a recent meeting it becomes clear that one of the women violated group confidentiality by discussing the details of another member's abuse history with her husband. What should the social worker do NEXT?

- A. Meet with the offending group member in an individual session to discuss the consequences of the violation.
- B. Process the confidentiality violation during the group.
- C. Refer the offending group member to a different group.
- D. Meet with the two clients' in a joint session outside of the group.

8 A client seeks services at a community mental health center. He reports that his chief complaint is that he can't get a job, so he is "stuck living in his parents' basement." He is dressed in pajamas with a neck tie. He reports that his only friends are people he knows online in an alien tracking club. He asks if the social worker believes in ghosts. What diagnosis should initially be considered for this client?

- A. Schizoid Personality Disorder
- B. Schizophrenia
- C. Schizotypal Personality Disorder

Answers & Rationales

Get a feel for the LMSW Exam



- 1 A** Rationale: A is the best answer because the client does not have a voice while she is in a session with her mother. It is important for the social worker to address what the client's needs and feelings are and help her differentiate them from her mother's. B is incorrect because it makes the assumption that the daughter wants an abortion, when we are not clear yet that she does. C is incorrect because it gives the power back to the mother rather than allowing her daughter to speak. D may be appropriate to do at a later time, but only after the social worker has met with the daughter individually to understand what she wants.
- 2 B** Rationale: B is the best answer here because reaction formation is a defense mechanism where an individual may feel one way, but acts in a different manner or says something to the contrary. A and C are other defense mechanisms.
- 3 D** Rationale: D is the best answer here because the social worker needs to consult with a supervisor to address the difficulties that she is having at work and how they are affecting her work with clients. A would be inappropriate to do. B and C would not be necessary to do at this time until the social worker has taken other steps to address the difficulties she is experiencing.
- 4 B** Rationale: B is correct because primary preventions are interventions that are done to prevent a problem from occurring in the future. In this case the social worker is using the group as a way to prevent future substance abuse issues in the future. A and C are other types of prevention methods.
- 5 A** Rationale: A is the FIRST step the social worker should take because the client is reporting feelings of hopelessness and makes a remark that infers she may be having suicidal thoughts. Therefore, we want to assess the client for any suicidal ideation, including if she has any intent or a plan. B and C may be helpful to do at a later time, but would not be the next step. D would be important to do, but only after we determine if the client is having suicidal thoughts.

Answers & Rationales

Get a feel for the LMSW Exam



- 6 A** Rationale: A is the BEST answer here because enabling is when an individual believes they are helping someone, but are in fact only perpetuating their problem or addiction. In this case the father is perpetuating his son's addiction by giving him a place to live and money to spend which makes it easy for him to continue to drink. B, C, and D are all terms that better describe different behaviors.
- 7 B** Rationale: Problems that occur during a group should be addressed within the group in order to maintain a cohesive unit. Therefore B is the best answer here because it allows the group to process what the violation means to them. A and D are incorrect because these would only isolate the problem from the group rather than addressing how it affects everyone. C would not be necessary at this time.
- 8 C** Rationale: This is a good example of a diagnosis question. Schizotypal Personality Disorder is characterized by social isolation, odd behavior, unusual dress and thinking, and unconventional beliefs.



What Therapists Say

Who have passed with TDC



Therapist Development Center (TDC) was a true lifesaver as I prepared for my LMSW/LSW. The program was recommended to me by my practicum supervisor, and I am so appreciative she recommended TDC to me. The overall structure of the program allowed me to focus on particular topics instead of navigating through the material independently. I attempted to study for my licensure exam before TDC and I was feeling so frustrated and overwhelmed with all of the social work material being discussed. With the guidance of TDC, I felt I went into my exam prepared and confident with my reasoning skills in addition to a broad sense of social work knowledge. I look forward to utilizing TDC for my LCSW in the near future!

- Lakan Shippy



TDC was the only thing that boosted my confidence enough to pass. Without the tips regarding snacks, I don't think I would've made it. I needed to get 100 out of 150 correct and I scored 115. That's TDC. For me, it took all the weight off me to organize a study plan. I felt like I could rely on this course and it was a done deal. Thankfully, that was right. Thank you, TDC.

- Lacey Michelle Scarborough



This program helped to understand what was needed to pass the exam and understand the content. I felt as if the way the content was set up was structured to help anyone pass the exam! The class provided structure and I appreciate that they are with you until you pass, if you need an extension or more help!

-James Edward Barrett Jr



TDC was recommended to me by two Social Work friends who also used the program in passing their exams over the past several years. I listened to the lectures and reviewed notes regularly and this program did not disappoint me! I needed 99 to pass and I scored 119! Thank you so much. I will be back for my clinical exam next!

- Leticia Keiser



Study With Us

Learn How Our Program Works



- ✓ Our LMSW Study System is an online program that you can access immediately once you sign up. Just log in and start studying.
- ✓ We provide an organized, 10-step study plan with handouts, lectures, quick study sheets, quizzes, and practice exams.
- ✓ In addition to reviewing content, we emphasize the test taking strategies and reasoning skills you need to pass.
- ✓ We provide FREE access to LMSW EXAM COACHES (who have passed with a score of at least 90%) to answer any questions you have while studying, including advising whether you are ready to take the exam.
- ✓ We are with you until you pass. Extending or repeating the program is FREE. You only pay ONE time.
- ✓ 95% of social workers pass using our system. For people who have failed using other prep material, scores increase an average of 18 points with our program.



Study Smart. Sign up today.

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