

I'm thinking about
social work
but...



What is social work?...

I'm too old to start again...

I've been out of school for too long...

What kind of support is there

for me as I learn?...

What will it be like when I begin

my job as a Social Worker?...

Okay okay, how do I find out more?

but...

What is social work?

If you're thinking about becoming a Social Worker, chances are that you might have seen them at work or know someone who is a Social Worker. The most important part of their job is helping individuals, families, groups and communities find ways to make positive choices and changes that lead to healthier lives. Social Workers are agents of change and persons of advocacy who are committed to the principles of equality and social justice. As part of a team, or on a one-to-one basis, Social Workers work with people, often when they are in crisis. They may continue working with their clients on their issues and problems over a number of months, or even years.

Some of the roles of a Social Worker include:

- child and family services (working with families to ensure the safety of children)
- corrections (working with youth and adults in correctional centres)
- addictions (helping people affected by addictions such as drug or alcohol abuse)

- seniors and disabilities (working with seniors and persons with disabilities by providing programs and services)
- mental health (providing programs and services to people who have mental health problems)
- medical social services (helping people in hospital and follow-up treatment or care)
- policy administration (working in government or other organizations to develop and administer social policies)
- community development (helping communities become healthier places to live)

Social work is very demanding, but also very rewarding. To see someone move from a crisis in their lives to making healthy and positive choices is the reason Social

According to Job Futures 2000:
75% of all Social Workers are women.
64.7% of all Social Workers were in the 35-54 age group.



Workers keep on with their work.

Social Workers Must Be Strong, Capable People

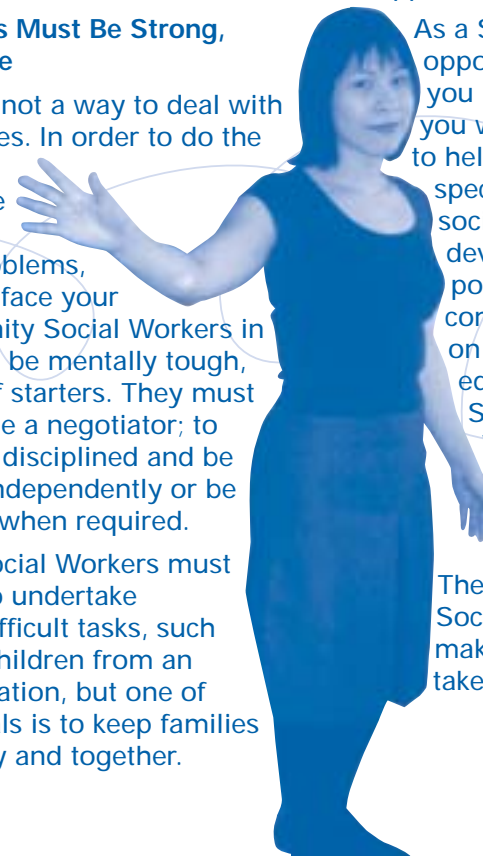
Social work is not a way to deal with your own issues. In order to do the best job in helping people resolve their issues and problems, you must first face your own. Community Social Workers in the NWT must be mentally tough, self-reliant self starters. They must learn how to be a negotiator; to be flexible yet disciplined and be able to work independently or be a team player when required.

In their job, Social Workers must be prepared to undertake emotionally difficult tasks, such as removing children from an unhealthy situation, but one of their main goals is to keep families strong, healthy and together.

Opportunity

As a Social Worker, you will have the opportunity to use all of the skills you have developed in your life and you will constantly learn new ways to help people. You can choose to specialize in one or two areas of social work; you can work at developing new systems and policy; you may travel to other communities; or you can even go on to university and continue your education to get your Bachelor of Social Work. Many Social Workers who have moved into other fields continue to apply the skills they learned as a Social Worker.

The opportunities for you as a Social Worker are whatever you make of them. You just need to take that first step.



but...

I'm too old to start again



You're Never Too Old To Help People

Some of the best Social Workers are those who have taken the time to get experience in life. For example, a recent student of the program was 61 when she graduated from the Social Work Program. As an adult, you use your life skills every day to make choices that, when you were younger, you may not have faced before. Your life experiences, combined with a desire to make a difference in people's lives and the right education, are a good foundation for becoming a good Social Worker.

Job Prospects

There are lots of opportunities available for Social Workers in the Northwest Territories. Once you have completed your social work education, you can work as a Community Social Worker, in your community and in communities in your region. You can also work in a hospital, in counselling agencies or treatment centres. There are lots of meaningful ways you can practice social work. Social Workers are in great demand in the Northwest Territories, so you can be assured of work.

Salaries

In the NWT, most Social Workers are hired and paid by their Health Authorities, and are considered GNWT public servants. In 2002, Social Workers could expect to make anywhere from \$55,294 to \$79,281, plus northern allowance benefits, depending on their experience.

Do Something For Yourself

Social Workers who begin practicing after they have taken time out to raise their families are often very satisfied because they know they can make a difference. If you've always wanted to find a way to help people and give back to your community, then follow your dream and you'll be amazed at how much richer your life will be.

A recent Aurora College graduate was 61 when she received her Diploma of Social Work.

but...

I've been out of school for too long



Going back to school can be intimidating at first, but Aurora College offers a supportive learning environment. Students are northerners, much like you, and include all age groups, from recent high school graduates to grandparents. The College also offers student support programs, one-on-one tutoring and many other services. If you don't have the academics to enter directly into the Social Work Diploma program, the College offers an opportunity to enter the Social Work Access Program, which will introduce you to the basic concepts of social work, while improving your overall academic skills.

Aurora College Social Work Program

Aurora College offers everything you need to become a Social Worker. By attending Aurora College, you can stay closer to home and family. The Aurora College Social Work Program incorporates northern and traditional knowledge, so everything you learn will be relevant to your career as a northern Social Worker. The Social Work Program is offered at Aurora College's Thebacha Campus in Fort Smith.

Another benefit of the Aurora College Social Work Program is that class sizes are smaller than you would find in most southern colleges, allowing you lots of one-on-one instruction. Smaller classes also allow you to share your experiences and challenges as you form friendships with your classmates. Chances are, you'll already know one or two of them!

In 2002, there were 212 students attending Thebacha Campus programs.

provincial/territorial departments. They may also work in private practice. Their duties may require them to: •interview clients individually, in families or in groups to assess their situation and problems and

Social Work Access Program

If you or the social work instructor at Aurora College feel that you need a little more preparation before beginning the Social Work Diploma Program, you can start out by taking the one-year Social Work Access Program to learn the basic concepts of social work, while upgrading your academic skills. This will help prepare you for the work ahead and give you time for personal reflection and growth.

Access Program courses include:

- English;
- Math;
- Personal development;
- Computer skills;
- Introduction to social work;
- Psychology; and
- Sociology.

Each of these courses will include a focus on northern social work.

Program Eligibility

To apply, you must have completed Grade 10, or be reading and writing at

the English 150 and Math 130 levels. If you don't have these requirements, you may be admitted to the Program as a mature student, if you show by completing the Aurora College test that you have equivalent skills or knowledge. The placement test will help determine your academic level.

One important thing to note is that all applicants must pass a criminal records check before entering into Social Work Programs.

Sound hard? Not really! You may be more ready than you think. Speak to the staff at Aurora College. It's their job to help make your career goals a reality. For more information, contact:

Since the Aurora College Social Work Program started in 1982, there have been more than 120 graduates.

The Registrar, Thebacha Campus
Aurora College
Box 600
Fort Smith, NT X0E 0P0
Tel: (867) 872-7500
Fax: (867) 872-3175

Social Work Diploma Program

Aurora College is pleased to offer a new Social Work Diploma Program in partnership with the University of Regina. This Program will provide you with a solid foundation in the areas of counselling skills and professional values you will need as a Social Worker. Through a series of theoretical and practical, hands-on experiences, and with a strong focus on the social issues, cultural groups and the programs and services available in the Northwest Territories, you will gain a basic understanding of human social problems, social systems and methods of intervention. You will graduate with a diploma that will allow you to work as a community Social Worker in the NWT.

Program Eligibility

In order to qualify for this program you need your Grade 12 diploma and English 33. Your experience and knowledge will be considered, but you will also need to:

- complete an Aurora College entrance exam to determine your academic level;
- provide three letters of reference from people who know you;
- pass a criminal records check;

determine the types of services they require •provide counsel and therapy to assist clients in developing skills to deal with and resolve their social and personal problems •plan programs of assistance for clients

- submit a personal statement describing why you want to become a Social Worker; and
- complete an interview with the Social Work Program Admissions Committee to ensure you have the personal qualities and behaviours suitable to the social work profession.

Previous experience working in social service agencies will give you a greater understanding of what it takes to be a Social Worker. For more information, contact:

Senior Instructor
 Social Work Program
 Thebacha Campus
 Aurora College
 Box 600
 Fort Smith, NT, X0E 0P0
 Tel: (867) 872-7578
 Fax (867) 872-3175
 socialwork@auroracollege.nt.ca

Degree Transfer Program – Partnership with the University of Regina

Another benefit of taking the Aurora College Social Work Program is that if you want to pursue further education, you can transfer directly to the University of Regina, where you can get your Bachelor of Social Work Degree after another two years of study. You can even go on to your Master of Social Work at the University of Regina.

Why would you need a degree? Getting a degree gives you two more years to learn skills that can help people. Or, if you decide you want a supervisory or management position, in the future HSS is working towards

tightening requirements. You will need a Bachelor's or Master's degree and several years of experience. And if you ever decide to work outside the NWT, most provinces require you to have a degree in social work in order to register and practice.

Field Practice

Working under the supervision of an experienced team of Social Workers, you will take your field practice in a community in the Northwest Territories. Field practice is the ideal way to experience social work first hand and it offers you the chance to put your newly learned skills into action.

So there you have it. There are lots of ways you can get into social work and now you know you will have a good education. What else do you need to know?

Hmmm... I wonder how I can get my diploma?



but...

What kind of support is there for me as I learn?



Help is available through many sources if you decide to go back to school. We know how hard it can be, without all of the added worries that can come up. Here are a list of sources and contact information to help you out.

Funding Your Education

Financial help is available through GNWT Student Financial Assistance (SFA) in the form of loans for the time you are in school. You can ask for an application package from:

Student Financial Assistance Program
Education, Culture and Employment
Box 1320, Lahm

Ridge Tower
Yellowknife, NT XIA 2L9
Telephone: (867) 873-7190
or 1-800-661-0793 (toll free)
Fax: (867) 873-0336 or 1-800-661-0893 (toll free)

You can also obtain information by contacting your local hamlet, town or band office, or one of the following Education, Culture and Employment Offices:

Fort Simpson	(867) 695-7334
Fort Smith	(867) 872-7217
Hay River	(867) 874-9200
Inuvik	(867) 777-7323
Norman Wells	(867) 587-2566
Yellowknife	(867) 766-5100

You can also get an SFA application online at www.nwtsfa.gov.nt.ca.

The Northern Development Program, offered through The GNWT Department of Health and Social Services, has a variety of programs which provide funding, travel allowances, mentoring and

In 2000-2001, the Student Financial Assistance program provided \$12,000,000 and the Northern Development Program \$205,000 in financial aid to NWT Students..

summer job programs for students studying social work. For more information contact:

Coordinator, Northern Development Program
Department of Health and Social Services
P.O. Box 1320
Yellowknife NT
X1A 2L9
Toll Free: 1-888-591-7884
Phone: 1-867-873-7168
Fax: 1-867-873-0634
E-mail: hlthss_recruitment@gov.nt.ca

Tutoring

If you feel you may need special tutoring, contact your community school, which can offer assistance. In

addition, Aurora College has a list of tutors who will be available to help you.

Child Care

Fort Smith has a certified community daycare. If you require space for your child or children, contact the College for more information. Make sure you request space for your children well in advance, to be assured of getting a space.

Housing

Thebacha Campus, Aurora College supplies accommodations for both single students and for those with families. You can apply for accommodation when you apply to attend the College. Housing will be assigned once you are registered in full-time studies. For availability and accommodation rate information, contact the Student Services Department, Thebacha Campus at 867-872-7505.



but...

What will it be like when I begin my job as a Social Worker?

Although most Social Workers have had positive experiences when starting work after graduation, when you begin your job as a Social Worker, you may find some resistance from people who know you. After all, they may not be used to viewing you as a Social Worker and it may take some time to accept you in that role.

A mentorship program may be available to help you adjust in your new job. You will be paired with an experienced Social Worker who will help guide you as you find your social work 'feet'. But remember, you will have the education and the diploma and if you believe it in your heart that you are able to help, you will. Bit by bit. One person at a time.



Support that is available to you as a Social Worker

As a Social Worker, you will be part of a community team and part of the greater team of your Health and Social Services Authority. Regular meetings with your colleagues, where you can share any difficulties you may be experiencing, ongoing training and support, are all part of being a Social Worker. In addition, as a registered Social Worker, you can become a member of the Association of Social Workers in Northern Canada, based in the NWT, which you may also use as a resource. For more information on the Association, contact:

Association of Social Workers in Northern Canada
Box 2963
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2R2
Tel: (867) 873--5707
Fax: (867) 873-8976
E-mail: dunbar@ssimicro.com
Web Site: www.socialworknorth.com

The Association of Social Workers in Northern Canada currently has over 100 members.

Making a difference

To move from a place where you are thinking about social work, to actually becoming a Social Worker is a journey. And just like any other journey, it will be filled with uncertainties. But, if you've always wanted to help make the lives of the people in your community, healthier and happier... if you had the chance to help even one person move from difficulties to a life of healthy choices... wouldn't it be worth it?



- In most places in the south, social workers must have a bachelor's degree in social work in order to register and practice and usually require some supervised practical experience. ★ In the North, you need as a

okay okay...

how do I find out more?



Talk to a Social Worker in your community

Chances are, it is a Social Worker that you know in your community who has been urging you to think about social work. Talk to him or her about it. They are the ones who will tell you that social work is worth it.

Aurora College

For more information about the Social Work Program at Aurora College, contact:

Senior Instructor
Social Work Program, Thebacha Campus
Aurora College
Box 600
Fort Smith, NT, X0E 0P0
Tel: (867) 872-7578
Fax: (867) 872-3175
socialwork@auroracollege.com

Department of Health and Social Services, Northern Development Program

For more information about the Northern Development Program and the opportunities available to you, contact:

Coordinator
Northern Development Program
Department of Health and Social Services
P.O. Box 1320
Yellowknife NT
X1A 2L9
Toll Free: 1-888-591-7884
Phone: 1-867-873-7168
Fax: 1-867-873-0634
E-mail: hlthss_recruitment@gov.nt.ca

Association of Social Workers in Northern Canada

For more information about the Association, contact:

Association of Social Workers in Northern Canada
Box 2963
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2R2
Tel: (867) 873-5707
Fax: (867) 873-8976
E-mail: dunbar@ssimicro.com

Web sites to visit:

Association of Social Workers in Northern Canada
<http://www.socialworknorth.com>

Canadian Association of Social Workers
<http://www.casw-acts.ca/>

Aurora College – Social Work Program
<http://www.auroracollege.nt.ca>

Northern Development Program
<http://www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca/careers/index.html>

Student Financial Assistance
<http://www.nwtsfa.gov.nt.ca/>

"It is only when you accept a challenge that you know what you are capable of."

Connie Norwegian,
Social Worker, Fort Simpson



Produced in partnership with...



All photos of Alison Blackduck by Arstrid Kruse.