

MSW Comprehensive Exam Study Guide
Human Behavior and the Social Environment (HBSE) Foundation

General HBSE content relevant to the exam:

- Social systems theory and the systems approach toward human behavior.
- Theoretical frameworks that describe, explain, and predict human behavior for individuals and families.
- Assessment of the strengths and limitations of various theories of human behavior and their implications for practice with diverse urban populations.
- Normal growth and developmental expectations of each stage of human life as conceptualized by major theorists.
- The role of social and cultural forces in the development and functioning of individuals and families.
- Understanding of behavior as a function of the interaction between multiple systems.
- Appreciation for the diversity of human experience and development, including the experience of women, people of color, gays and lesbians, and people with disabilities.
- Historical and socioeconomic factors which have an impact on oppressed and minority communities.
- The cultural uniqueness, status, history, needs, problems, strengths, and resources of ethnic and other oppressed groups in the diverse urban community of Las Vegas.
- The strengths and empowerment approaches to understanding human beings in the social environment.
- A willingness to promote social and economic justice.
- NASW Code of Ethics: values and ethics of social work, particularly as they relate to knowledge of human behavior in the social environment.

Examples of theories:

Systems
Conflict
Psychodynamic
Life span development (developmental theory)
Cognitive theories
Social construction
Social learning
Exchange
Behavioral
Symbolic interactionism
Ecosystems theory
Feminist theories

Life Span Development

- Knowledge of life stages and tasks at each stage
- Understand multiple dimensions (biological, psychological, social, cultural) of human being at each developmental stage
- Knowledge of social problems relevant to the developmental stage

Family

- Family structure
- Family development
- Family culture
- Genograms

DSM

- Axes
- Strengths and weaknesses of the DSM

Highly Recommended Readings

Fellin, P. (2001). *The community and the social worker*. Itasca, Ill: Peacock.

Kirst-Ashman, K. (2000). *Human behavior, communities, organizations, and groups in the macro social environment*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Robbins, S., Chatterjee, P., & Canda, E. (1998). *Contemporary human behavior theory*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Additional Readings

Garbarino, J. (1992). *Children and families in the social environment*. NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

Greene, R. (1994). *Human behavior theory: A diversity framework*. NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

Hasenfeld, Y. (Ed.). (1992). *Human services as complex organizations*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Hutchinson, E. (1999). *Dimensions of human behavior: The changing life course*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Karls, J. & Wandrei, K. (1994). *Person-in-environment system*. Washington, DC: NASW.

Morrison, J. (1995). *DSM-IV made easy*. NY: Guilford Press.

Palen, J. (1997). *The urban world*. NY: McGraw-Hill Co.

Pillari, V. & Newsome, M. (1998). *Human behavior in the social environment: Families, groups, organizations, and communities*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Shafritz, J. & Ott, J. (2001). *Classics of organization theory*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Schriver, J. (2001). *Human behavior and the social environment: Shifting paradigms in essential knowledge for social work practice*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.