

UMSL School of Social Work
Office of Field Education
Theories, Perspective and Practice models

This list of theories and practice models is designed to assist students and field instructors with linking theory to practice, and to assist with completion of the educational learning agreement (ELA). This is not an exhaustive list. Some practicum sites have very specific research based practice models, and students are encouraged to incorporate those models into the ELA. There are many other theories that can apply to social work practice, and students and field instructors are encourage to think about those that have the most appropriate application in their settings.

Perspectives guiding social work practice

- Strengths perspective
- Person In Environment (PIE)
- Systems

Orienting/Explanatory Theories for Micro Level Practice (individuals and families)

- Social Systems
- Behavioral
- Stage of Change
- Stages of grief
- Theories of human development

Please note that the list below refers to types of human development theories. Please be specific when referring to the theory on the ELA. For example, Kohlberg's theory of moral development, Piaget's theory of cognitive development, Erikson's stages of psycho- social development, etc.

- Moral Development
- Cognitive Development
- Psychosocial Development
- Psychosexual Development
- Social learning

- Social Exchange
- Biopsychosocial
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- Psychodynamic
- Object Relations
- Family life cycle
- Family systems
- Crisis

- Attachment
- Activity
- Continuity
- Role theory

Practice Theories and Models for Micro Level Practice

- Behavioral therapy
- Crisis Intervention
- Family Reunification
- Family Preservation
- Strategic Family Therapy
- Structural Family Therapy
- Family Play therapy
- Play therapy
- Solution focused therapy
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Trauma focused CBT
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)
- Client Centered Therapy
- Motivational interviewing
- Task Centered
- Empowerment
- Harm Reduction
- Person centered care
- Life review
- Grief therapy

Orienting/Explanatory Theories for Mezzo level

Organizations

- Organizational systems
- Organizational behavior
- Scientific management
- Administrative management
- Humanistic
- Leadership theories
- Social exchange
- Social learning
- Role theory
- Feminist theory

Groups

- Group dynamics
- Group roles
- Stages of group development
- Social systems

Practice Theories/models for Mezzo Level Practice

Organizations

- Organizational and program development
- Program management
- Program planning
- Empowerment
- Self-help
- Resource mobilization

Groups

- Educational groups
- Psycho-educational groups
- Task groups
- Support groups
- Counseling/therapy groups
- Growth groups
- Self-help groups

Orienting/Explanatory Theories for Macro Level Practice

- Systems
 - Mechanical analogy
 - Organismic analogy
- Asset theory
- Institutional theory
- Critical theory/Conflict theory
- Social exchange
- Ecological framework
- Human or Population Ecology theory
- Multi-causal
- Social learning
- Social change
- Political economy

- Social movement
- Social Structure
- Power dependency theory
- Resource mobilization
- Feminist theory

Practice Theories/Models for Macro Level Practice

- Community development
- Social and economic development
- Community organization
- Policy Practice
- Case to cause
- Research practice
- Social Justice effort
- Harm reduction
- Social Planning
- Prevention
- Human rights