**Theories & Perspectives**

Social work students have been informed that they will draw upon various theories to help them understand clients and to help determine interventions based on evidence-based practices. Below are some of the theories and perspectives have been introduced to in their classes here at K-State.

**The Systems Perspective Assumptions**

* Sees human behavior as the outcome of reciprocal interactions of persons operating within linked social systems.
* The ecological systems model is an adaptation of systems theory and focuses on evaluating interactions between people and their environments.
  + Acknowledges formal & informal systems in clients’ lives.
  + Includes subsystems, interpersonal systems, macro systems, & the physical environment.
  + Often referred to as “Person-in-Environment”

**Strengths Perspective Assumptions**

* Acknowledge that clients have existing reservoirs of resources and competencies to draw upon.
* Recognizes that each client has a distinct capacity for growth and change.
* Define problems as occurring within the transactions between systems rather than residing in deficient system functioning.
* Hold that collaboration augments existing strengths to build new resources.
* Affirm that clients know their situations best and, given options, can determine the best solutions for their challenges.
* Maintain that positive change builds on a vision of future possibilities.
* Support a process to magnify mastery and competence rather than correct deficits.

**Empowerment Perspective Assumptions**

* Embodies our own sense of competence, mastery, strength, and ability to effect change.
* Is both a process and a goal, through which individuals and groups gain mastery over their lives, become active participants, and make decisions, i.e. gain control over their lives and the environment in which they interact.

**Trauma Informed Care Assumptions**

* A perspective of “What happened to you?” versus “What is wrong with you?” and understanding that all behavior has meaning, recognizing symptoms as survival skills.
* Cultivates resilience
* Principles
  + Safety
  + Trustworthiness
  + Choice, Voice & Empowerment
  + Collaboration
  + Peer Support
  + Cultural, Historical and Gender Humility
* A trauma-informed environment:
  + Realizes the prevalence of trauma
  + Recognizes how trauma affects people
  + Responds by infusing knowledge about trauma and recovery into policies, procedures, and practices
  + Resists re-traumatization