

**Florida Gulf Coast University
Marieb College of Health and Human Services Department of
Social Work**

**SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION PACKET
Master of Social Work Program
Summer 2021 Admission**

October 2020

Dear MSW Applicant:

We are pleased that you are considering our Master of Social Work Program in Clinical Social Work at Florida Gulf Coast University. You must apply for admission to FGCU Graduate Admissions as well as submitting the supplemental MSW application. An application packet for the full-time program, the advanced standing program, and part-time program is included with this letter. Students who have earned credit from another MSW program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education must also apply. The determination of what previously earned credits will transfer will be made upon acceptance into the program at FGCU.

Carefully read the information and instructions on each form and submit all materials in one envelope. Use the enclosed *Checklist of Applications Materials* to help guide the process. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. It is imperative that EVERY ITEM IS COMPLETED AND CHECKED BEFORE YOUR APPLICATION IS RETURNED TO GRADUATE Admissions.

Applications must be submitted to:

Florida Gulf Coast University Graduate
Admissions
10501 FGCU Blvd. South Ft. Myers, FL
33965-6565

The Office of Graduate Admissions will forward completed application packets to the Department of Social Work for processing.

The deadline for applications is January 15, 2021, for summer 2021 admission. Please do not hesitate to direct questions regarding the application or admissions process to the MSW Coordinator, Hugh Clark at hclark@fgcu.edu or (239) 590-7824 or to the Department Chair, Thomas Felke at tfelke@fgcu.edu or (239) 590-7841. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Thomas Felke, Ph.D., MSW
Chair, Department of Social Work

Hugh Clark, Ph.D., MSSW
MSW Program Coordinator

The Master of Social Work Program at Florida Gulf Coast University

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Grounded in the liberal arts and based on foundation social work skills, the Master of Social Work degree prepares graduates for autonomous clinical social work practice. Graduates from our program often go on to become leaders in their field of practice, frequently moving into administrative roles. Graduates are eligible to apply for the Clinical Social Worker License (LCSW).

Clinical social work has a primary focus on the mental, emotional, and behavioral well-being of individuals, couples, families, and groups. It centers on a holistic approach to psychotherapy and the client's relationship to his or her environment. Clinical social work views the client's relationship with his or her environment as essential to treatment planning (NASW, Clinical Social Work Practice Standards, p. 9).

Students may pursue the MSW degree on a full-time or part-time basis. The full-time program includes two years (four semesters) of combined academic and experiential learning. Sixty credit hours are required for graduation. Twelve of those hours are field placements in social service agencies, 500 clock hours each year (or 250 per semester). The first year is the generalist year in which students learn the basics of the profession and the multiple ways of intervening with oppressed and underserved populations from a social and economic justice perspective. The second year of the MSW degree at FGCU has a clinical concentration focusing on interventions with smaller systems: individuals, families, couples and groups.

Students who are accepted into the Advanced Standing Program may have up to 30 credit hours of their BSW degree substitute for the first (generalist) year of the MSW program.

The MSW program may be taken on a part-time basis. This option will take four years, including two summers, of combined academic and experiential learning. Advanced Standing MSW program option will take two years, including one summer.

Coursework is sequenced and takes place for each cohort on a specific day each week. Additionally, students are expected to take three credit hours of field education per semester or approximately 16-17 hours of field placement per week. Students are required to obtain professional liability insurance prior to begin field placement.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Regular Program:

- Earned bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university.
- Admission to FGCU Graduate Admissions (<https://www2.fgcu.edu/Graduate/index.html>)
- Evidence of broad coursework in the liberal arts: 6 hours General Science (must include Human Biology); 6 hours English Composition; 6 hours Humanities; 6 hours Social Sciences; 6 hours Quantitative Math.
- Successful completion of a course in statistics
- Earned a 3.0 GPA or higher for the final 60 hours of your undergraduate degree.
- Post-graduate social service experience is preferred.
- Three professional references including one from a former instructor, if available.

- A written case study assessment with your personal reflection (to be evaluated by the Graduate Admissions Committee for commitment to social work values, social justice, diversity, writing skills, etc.).
- Interviews may be required.
- Completion of MSW Supplemental Application Packet (PDF).
- An international applicant for whom English is a second language is required to submit a score of 550 or higher on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).
- Meeting the minimum requirements for admission does not guarantee acceptance into the MSW program at FGCU.

Advanced Standing Program:

- Earned baccalaureate of social work degree within the *past five years* from a social work program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.
- Admission to FGCU Graduate Admissions (<https://www2.fgcu.edu/Graduate/index.html>)
- Successful completion of a course in statistics.
- Earned a 3.5 GPA or higher for the final 60 hours of your undergraduate degree.
- One year post-baccalaureate employment (40 hours per week) as a social worker is preferred.
- Three professional references including one from a post-baccalaureate employer, if available.
- A written personal statement in relation to the case study (to be evaluated by the Graduate Admissions Committee for commitment to social work values, social justice, diversity, writing skills, etc.).
- An interview may be required.
- Completion of MSW Application Package (PDF).
- Completed Advanced Standing Application Packet
- Copy of complete BSW Final Field Performance Evaluation.
- An international applicant for whom English is a second language is required to submit a score of 550 or higher on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).
- Meeting the requirements for admission does not guarantee acceptance into the Advanced Standing MSW program at FGCU

TRANSFER CREDIT

The Department of Social Work has formal policies and procedures concerning the transfer of credit from other accredited colleges and universities, including the transfer of credit from other CSWE accredited social work programs. Student's life or work experience is highly valued by the Department of Social Work. However, neither classroom nor practicum course credit will be granted for such life experience, even when it relates directly to social work.

A student who has previously earned graduate level credit from a Master of Social Work program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education must submit her or his most current transcript as part of the application process.

A student may request that a course taken prior to enrollment in the MSW program be accepted as a substitute for a social work elective course. The course must be at the graduate level and not a requirement for another graduate degree. The determination of acceptance of elective credit will be made after the student has been admitted to the program.

TRANSFER STUDENT POLICY

Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) has formal policies and procedures for the transfer of credits from other accredited colleges and universities, including the transfer of credit from other CSWE accredited Master's degree programs. The MSW program seeks to prevent duplication of academic content by recognizing prior educational achievement.

Transfer of credit from another accredited Social Work Program requires a final grade of "B" or better and approval of the MSW Program Coordinator. The Department Chair reviews the transfer requests on a case-by-case basis and may request the course syllabus or course description so that it may be compared to the equivalent course at FGCU. The faculty member who teaches the course at FGCU may be consulted. Students may also be asked to provide details regarding course content and examples of written work.

Students may transfer into a graduate program at FGCU a limited number of credit hours from graduate level courses completed at a regionally accredited college or university or equivalent foreign institution and not applied to another awarded degree.

The following are University guidelines concerning transfer of graduate credit:

1. Unless otherwise specified by the individual graduate program in question a maximum of 12 graduate-level credits may be transferred into the college/program and applied toward the degree.
2. The University reserves the right to evaluate transfer courses on an individual basis. The date any previous coursework was completed and concordance of content to current program requirements are factors that may be used to determine course transfer and acceptance toward degrees.
3. Awarding transfer credit:
 - a. Transfer courses must be applicable toward the graduate degree being sought at FGCU and must be approved by the college dean (or designee). Check with the individual program in question regarding restrictions on the acceptance of transfer credits, including any time limitations.
 - b. Military Service: Official credentials from military service schools will be evaluated on the basis of American Council on Education (ACE) recommendations. Credit may be granted when courses are equivalent to those offered by FGCU; however, recommendations by the ACE are not binding upon the University.
 - c. Transfer credits will not be computed as part of a student's FGCU grade point average.
 - d. Accreditation status and evaluation of credits from an institution outside the U.S.A. must be made on a course-by-course basis by World Education Services, Josef Silny & Associates, Incorporated, or any other evaluation company approved by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES). The applicant pays for this service and is responsible for contacting the evaluating agency directly.
 - e. All transfer credit evaluations are completed after admission to the University. Only official transcripts will be evaluated.

- f. Transfer students from non-regionally accredited Florida institutions that follow the state common course numbering system may have a limited number of credits transferred. (FGCU Catalogue, 2011-2012: <https://www2.fgcu.edu/Catalog/gadmissionsdetail.asp?FMID=Graduate+Admissions&page=14>)

A limited number of transfer students are admitted to the MSW program each year. Students may request that courses taken prior to enrollment in the FGCU MSW program be accepted as substitute for social work elective courses. The following rules will apply in such cases:

1. The course was graduate level and offered by an accredited college or university
2. The course was taken in a CSWE accredited MSW Program
3. The course bears direct relevance to the master's level of social work education
4. The course was not used to meet requirement for another degree
5. The student earned a grade of "B" or better and provides an official transcript attesting to that fact.
6. The course was completed within five years prior to admission to the MSW program at FGCU.

**Florida Gulf Coast University
Department of Social Work
Master of Social Work Program Application**

Please indicate the program for which you are applying. ***You may apply to only one program.***

Regular Program

Advanced Standing Program

Full-time (2 year)

Full-time (1 year)

Part-time (4 year)

Part-time (2 year)

Medical Social Work Concentration

Yes

No

Name:

(Last)

(First)

(MI)

Florida Gulf Coast University Identification Number (UIN):

Current Address:

(Street)

(City)

(ZIP)

Permanent Address:

(Street)

(City)

(ZIP)

Telephone number: ()

(daytime) ()

(evening)

E-mail Address:

Anticipated semester to begin:

Please list other names by which you have been known:

Have you previously applied for admission for the MSW Program at FGCU? Yes No

Place of Birth:

City State

Nation of Citizenship:

Birth Date: Month

Date

Year

Age:

Florida Gulf Coast University has a commitment to encourage diversity among all persons affiliated with the MSW Program. This information will assist us in our efforts to monitor our effectiveness in this area. (Optional)

Sex: Male Female

Ethnic Origin: (Check all that apply)

Hispanic

Asian or Pacific Islander

Black (not of Hispanic origin)

American Indian or Alaska Native

White (not of Hispanic origin)

Other: Please specify

Indicate how many hours a week you will be working during the school year

Educational Experience: List ALL colleges and universities you have attended starting with the most recent. The Office of Graduate Admissions MUST receive official transcripts from all colleges and universities you have attended, unless you have graduated from FGCU or currently attend FGCU for your bachelor's degree. Please request all official transcripts and have them sent to:

Florida Gulf Coast University
Office of Graduate Admissions
10501 FGCU Blvd. South
Ft. Myers, FL 33965-6565

Name and location of College/University	Dates of Attendance	Major and Degree Received	For office use only Date Received
	From: _____(mo./yr.) To: _____(mo./yr.)		
	From: _____(mo./yr.) To: _____(mo./yr.)		
	From: _____(mo./yr.) To: _____(mo./yr.)		
	From: _____(mo./yr.) To: _____(mo./yr.)		

**Florida Gulf Coast University
Department of Social Work
Masters of Social Work Program**

Legal Disclosure Statement

For field placement purposes it is necessary that you disclose any records expunged pursuant to applicable law. If you answer yes to any of the following questions, you must fully disclose all incidents in a separate sheet of paper. By doing so, you can avoid any risk of disciplinary action or revocation of an offer of admission or rejection by any field placement. You are required to provide the MSW program with copies of all official documents explaining the final disposition of the proceedings. This information is confidential; any action taken will first be discussed with you.

- 1) Are you currently, or have you ever been, charged with or subject to disciplinary action for scholastic or any type of misconduct at any educational institution? Yes No
- 2) Have you ever been charged with a violation of the law (misdemeanor or felony) which resulted in, or, if still pending, could result in, probation, community service, incarceration, or the revocation or suspension of your driver's license (including traffic violations which resulted in a fine of \$200.00 or more)? Yes No
- 3) I understand that if there are currently any pending criminal charges against me in any jurisdiction this may make me ineligible for admission to the FGCU Department of Social Work Master of Social Work Program, and/or an agency placement for Field Education. Further, should I fail to disclose such pending legal action I understand that FGCU may be obligated to take immediate action to terminate me from my program of study.
- 4) I understand that a history of criminal conviction may negatively impact the ability of the Department of Social Work to place me with an agency for the purposes of completing my field education requirements.
- 5) I understand that it is my responsibility to disclose information regarding all prior adult convictions and/or criminal penalties to any agency where I may be placed for field education purposes and that failure to be forthcoming with this information, can result in dismissal from the agency and disciplinary action by FGCU and the Department of Social Work.
- 6) I understand that in Florida a felony history may make me ineligible to become a licensed social worker. For further information, contact the Florida Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy, & Mental Health Counseling, 4052 Bald Cypress Way, BIN #C08, Tallahassee, FL 32399, Telephone: 850-488-0595.
- 7) Additionally, I understand that it is my responsibility to disclose to the Field Education Coordinator information regarding any possible conflict of interest that may exist between myself and an agency where I may be placed for field placement; whether this be pre-existing or whether it occurs following agency assignment for the purposes of field placement. Failure to be forthcoming with this information can result in dismissal from the agency and disciplinary action by FGCU and the Department of Social Work.

Name (print):

Signature: _____

Date:

**Florida Gulf Coast University
Department of Social Work
Masters of Social Work Program**

Self-Disclosure Statement

All students applying for field placement must complete this self-disclosure statement regarding felony arrests, felony convictions, or both. Many agencies require background checks prior to accepting a student for field placement or employment. If you answer 'Yes' to any of these questions, please attach the final disposition or discharge papers you received from the court.

Have you ever been arrested for a misdemeanor offense? Yes No

If yes, please explain. Attach a separate sheet if necessary.

Have you ever been convicted of a misdemeanor offense? Yes No

If yes, please explain. Attach a separate sheet if necessary.

Have you ever been arrested for a felony offense? Yes No

If yes, please explain. Attach a separate sheet if necessary.

Have you ever been convicted of a felony offense? Yes No

If yes, please explain. Attach a separate sheet if necessary.

Signature: _____

Date: __

Professional or Other Work Experience

List all paid employment in chronological order, starting with the most recent. Please be specific in describing the positions you have held, including full- and part-time. Account for all of your time for a minimum of the past ten years. If additional space is needed, use a separate sheet of paper.

Paid Employment

Name of Organization and Immediate Supervisor	Dates Month/Year	Position Held	Hours per Week
	From: To:		
	From: To:		
	From: To:		
	From: To:		

Internships

Name of Organization and Immediate Supervisor	Dates Month/Year	Position Held	Hours per Week
	From: To:		
	From: To:		

Volunteer Experience

Name of Organization and Immediate Supervisor	Dates Month/Year	Position Held	Hours per Week
	From: To:		
	From: To:		
	From: To:		
	From: To:		

NOTE: Do not attach a resume in lieu of completing the above sections!

Name (Print):

Signature: _____

Date:

Florida Gulf Coast University Identification Number (UIN):

**Florida Gulf Coast University
Department of Social Work
Masters of Social Work Program**

Application Certification Statement

IMPORTANT: EACH APPLICANT MUST READ AND SIGN THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT

By signing this statement, I certify that:

1. I understand that this application is for admission to Florida Gulf Coast University only and is valid for the term indicated on page 1.
2. I understand and agree that I will be bound by the FGCU MSW Program and University regulations concerning admission requirements as published in the FGCU Catalogue for year I am admitted.
3. I understand that admission to the program is competitive and that this application does not ensure my admission to the Master's Degree Program in Social Work.
4. I certify that all the information given in this application is complete, accurate, and true, and if admitted, I hereby agree to abide by the policies of the Board of Trustees and the rules and regulations currently found on the FGCU website (<https://www2.fgcu.edu/generalcounsel/regulations.asp>).
5. I authorize the release of information concerning my academic progress to educational institutions for research study purposes.
6. I will notify the Admissions Office of any changes in the information I have given prior to my entry into the University.
7. I understand that I must secure professional liability insurance prior to my placement in the field internship.

Signature of Applicant: _____

Date:

Florida Gulf Coast University Identification Number (UIN):

LETTERS OF REFERENCE

Below is the request for a letter of reference and the summary evaluation form required to be completed by three referees who have knowledge of your interest and suitability for entering the FGCU MSW Program and the social work profession. Duplicate as needed.

For applicants to the Regular MSW program (full-time, two year or part-time, four year):

- Three professional references including one from a former instructor, if available.

For applicants to the Advanced Standing MSW program, (full-time, one year or part-time, two year):

- Three professional references including one from a post-baccalaureate employer, if available.
- See Advanced Standing supplemental application packet for additional required reference from MSW Field Coordinator.

Florida Gulf Coast University
Department of Social Work
Merwin Hall – 134-A
10501 FGCU Blvd. South
Ft. Myers FL 33965-6565

**Request for Reference
Master of Social Work Program**

To be completed by Applicant

Name of Applicant: _____

Name of Reference: _____

Notice of Waiver – Applicant, you must sign and indicate whether you wish to waive your right of access if this letter is to be included in your file.

I am aware of my rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 to have access to letters of recommendation written on my behalf.

It is my desire that this letter be written in confidence, and therefore I wish to waive my right of access to this letter.

I wish to retain my right of access.

Signature of Applicant

Date

To the Referee

The applicant named above has selected you to be a reference for her/his admission to the Master of Social Work (MSW) Program at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU). Your candid assessment of the applicant will assist the Admissions Committee in making an admission decision on her/his behalf. Application to the MSW program at FGCU is a self-managed process; therefore, the applicant is responsible for collecting and submitting all letters of reference. This insures that the applicant knows the application is complete when s/he submits it to Graduate Admissions. After completing your letter and the Summary Evaluation form, please place it in an envelope, seal it, and sign across the seal. Return this envelope to the applicant who will forward it, unopened to the Office of Graduate Admissions with other application materials.

For your information, the deadline for application to the MSW program is **January 15, 2020**.

Please complete and allow enough time for the applicant to return this with her/his application materials by the deadline. Incomplete applications or applications received after the deadline will not be considered for admission.

We appreciate your willingness to cooperate with the Department of Social Work in our selection process for the MSW Program.

To be completed by the Referee

How long and in what capacity have you known the applicant?

Please provide a statement concerning the applicant's scholarship, personality, character, and professional promise. Include in this statement an assessment of the applicant's strengths and challenges and your view of the applicant's philosophical congruence with the values and ethics of social work. You may use your organization's letterhead if you wish.

Summary Evaluation Form (Required)

Using the chart below, please rate the applicant in comparison to others whom you have known in a similar capacity.

	Below average	Average	Above average	Excellent	Outstanding (Top 5%)	No basis for judgment
Intellectual Potential						
Ability to work with others						
Emotional Stability/Self-Control						
Responsibility						
Communication skills – oral						
Communication Skills – written						
Ability to analyze a problem and formulate a solution						
Motivation for proposed program of study						
Concern with social issues/justice issues						
Demonstrated commitment to work on behalf of oppressed populations						

Recommendation:

Highly recommend admission

Recommend

Recommend with reservation

Do not recommend

Name:

(Print Name)

_____ (Signature)

Agency/Organization:

Address:

Title/Position:

Degree

**Florida Gulf Coast University
Department of Social Work
Master of Social Work
Program**

**Personal Narrative Instructions and Cover
Sheet**

The purpose of the personal narrative is to provide you with the opportunity to tell the Admissions Committee your reasons for choosing the discipline of professional social work as a career.

The essay should include:

1. An explanation of your personal background including what has influenced your choice of this profession including your personal relationships and professional, political, personal, and cultural experiences.
2. Your personal evaluation of your motivation and preparedness to attend graduate school. Include any supports or barriers that exist for your entry into the MSW Program at this time.
3. Describe your career goals as they relate to your educational plans.

This essay should be four to six pages in length, double-spaced, with attention to grammar and spelling, organization, and clarity of presentation.

Please sign and date this cover sheet, and attach it to your essay.

Name (print):

Signature:

Date:

**Florida Gulf Coast University
Department of Social Work
Advanced Standing MSW Program**

Supplemental Application

In addition to the Application to Graduate Admissions and the Application for Admission to the MSW Program, those applying for advanced standing status must provide the following information.

Name:

School from which BSW was earned:

Year of Graduation:

Acknowledgement of Minimum Qualifications

1. Earned BSW degree from a program accredited by the Council of Social Work Education within the preceding five years.
2. 3.5 or better cumulative GPA in all undergraduate social work courses
3. Completed verification of the field practicum that has been signed by the field representative from the school from which you earned the BSW degree.

By submitting this application, I am stating that I have successfully met all minimum qualifications in addition to the Application to Graduate Admissions and the Application to the MSW Program at Florida Gulf Coast University.

Name (print):

Date:

Signature: _____

**Florida Gulf Coast University
Department of Social Work
Advanced Standing MSW Program
Supplemental Application**

BSW Field Performance Evaluation

To be completed by the Applicant:

Name:

FGCU UIN:

Semester and year BSW degree conferred:

Name of College/University:

Address of College/University:

Field Coordinator:

Name of Practicum Agency:

To: BSW Field Coordinator

The Admissions Committee of the MSW Program at Florida Gulf Coast University requests that, as part of the Advanced Standing Application process, the applicant submit a copy of their BSW Final Field Evaluation. Advanced Standing may be considered for an applicant who has graduated with a BSW from a CSWE accredited program to the clinical concentration year. This form serves as verification by the university awarding the degree of the student's successful integration of all areas of curriculum through the field experience.

Please return to the applicant in a seal envelope with your signature across the seal.

Thank you for your assistance in our admissions process.

Thomas Felke, PhD, MSW
Chair, Department of Social Work

Hugh Clark, Ph.D., MSSW,
MSW Program Coordinator

**Florida Gulf Coast University
Department of Social Work
Master of Social Work
Program**

Social Work Case Study Instructions

The purpose of the Case Study is to provide you with the opportunity to show the Admissions Committee your understanding of professional social work as a career.

The essay should include:

Identify at least one of the six Core Values found in the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (see link below). Using the case found at the *end of the application*, please address the following:

- 1) How the value resonates with your personal and professional values and
- 2) How that value is exemplified in the case.
--Be sure to Identify 2 areas of strength (e.g. resources, resilience, past successes, etc..) and 2 areas of concern which should be addressed as you might work with this family.

<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

This essay should be one to two pages in length, double-spaced, with attention to grammar and spelling, organization, and clarity of presentation.

Please sign and date this cover sheet, and attach it to your essay.

Name (print):

Signature:

Date:

REGULAR MSW STUDENT CASE STUDY:

Case: The Sanchez Family

Taken from Ravazzin Center for Social Work Research in Aging. (2003). *Generalist Social Work Practice with Individuals, Families and Groups I: Teaching Casebook*: Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service.

Mr. and Mrs. Sanchez, aged 77 and 68 respectively, have been raising their two grandchildren for the past five years. Maria (age 10) and Tony (13) were orphaned five years ago when their parents (the Sanchez's daughter and her husband) were killed in an automobile accident. The children's father was driving home with his wife home from a party where he had been drinking heavily. Neither of the Sanchez's two other children were in a position to take on parenting responsibilities. Mr. Sanchez is retired from a position with the post office. Mrs. Sanchez supplemented their income by cleaning apartments.

Approximately two months ago, Mr. Sanchez suffered a stroke, which left him with considerable impairment. He has been admitted to a rehab facility, where he is progressing well, and the expectation is that he will be returning home. He currently has some speech impairment and is partially paralyzed on one side. It is not clear how fully he will recover, but the expectation is that there will be some residual impairment. It is also unclear how he will be able to manage as the home has two stories, and the only bathroom is on the second floor.

Prior to Mr. Sanchez's stroke, Tony was beginning to get into trouble at school. This took the form of "sassing" his teachers and failing to do his homework assignments. Last week, Tony assaulted another student and was therefore temporarily suspended from school. Maria, always a quiet child, has presented no problems at school, although her teachers have noticed that she now spends more time by herself.

Mrs. Sanchez initially was able to handle things with the same determination and task-oriented focus that she used to deal with the loss of her daughter and transition to the "parent" role for her grandchildren. However, Tony's suspension from school has taxed her beyond her ability to cope. Mrs. Sanchez has become weepy, unable to focus, and unable to make decisions. She has had difficulty explaining to Tony and Maria what is happening to their grandfather. She has not told Mr. Sanchez about Tony's suspension.

Mrs. Sanchez is called to attend a meeting with the school principal and social worker. When the social worker asks Mrs. Sanchez if she could give them any insight into why Tony has become so aggressive, she bursts into tears.

ADVANCED STANDING STUDENT CASE STUDY:

Case: Social support for caregivers

Taken from: Lubben, J. E., & Gironde, M. W., (2000). Social support networks. In D. Osterweil, K. Brummel-Smith, & J. C. Beck (Eds.), *Comprehensive geriatric assessment* (pp. 121–137). McGraw-Hill.

Mr. Smith, a retired federal employee, and his wife of more than forty years seemed to be coping well on his relatively generous retirement pay and extensive health insurance plan. For more than forty years, they lived together in a traditional blue-collar neighborhood in a house they had inherited from Mrs. Smith's parents. The Smith's two children both live more than 2000 miles away but regularly talk on the telephone. At least once a year, the children along with grandchildren visit the Smiths. From all external appearances, the Smiths are an octogenarian couple successfully aging. That misconception was shattered late one evening when Mrs. Smith tumbled down a flight of stairs breaking both wrists and cracking a vertebrae in her neck. The fall was partially caused because Mrs. Smith did not want to turn on a light while she went to the bathroom for fear that the light would awaken Mr. Smith. Given Mrs. Smith's extensive osteoporosis, her broken wrists required extensive reconstructive hand surgery and many weeks of hospitalization.

During Mrs. Smith's extensive hospitalization, Mr. Smith's own health problems became more evident. His wife had concealed his increasing frailty including the fact that he had incurred a number of falls around the house. These falls may have been associated with a drinking problem that Mr. Smith had developed. He drank partially to escape the loneliness brought on by his no longer being able to see friends from his former place of employment. He was never an out-going person and seemed less so after his retirement. Thus, he never developed new friends to compensate for those he once had at work. When he retired from his job, he essentially retired also from his friendship network and, overtime, developed a severe case of depression. His increasing problem with drinking alcohol was most likely a case of self-medication.

With the deception uncovered, the Smith's two children became more involved in monitoring their parent's situation. They also secured formal case management and home health care services to facilitate Mrs. Smith's recovery. The children also provided extensive periods of social support to both infirm parents during Mrs. Smith's rehabilitation. Once she regained much of her strength, the children backed off allowing Mrs. Smith to again resume much of the responsibility for caring for her husband. However, children also empowered close friends and neighbors to regularly check on the older Smith couple and to call either of the children at first sign of any difficulties.