

Social Work With an Ethnically Heterogeneous Population of Cancer Patients



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Social Work Code of Ethics

Ethical Principle:

“Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.”

“Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity.”



What Constitutes the Israeli Population?



Patient Backgrounds

Jewish Patients (70%)

❖ Various Groups

Ultra-Orthodox, Orthodox, Secular, Of Eastern and Western Origin, Immigrants from Diverse Countries

❖ Various Countries of Origin: North Africa, Middle Eastern Muslim Countries, East & West Europe, North & South America, Australia

Arab Patients- (30%)

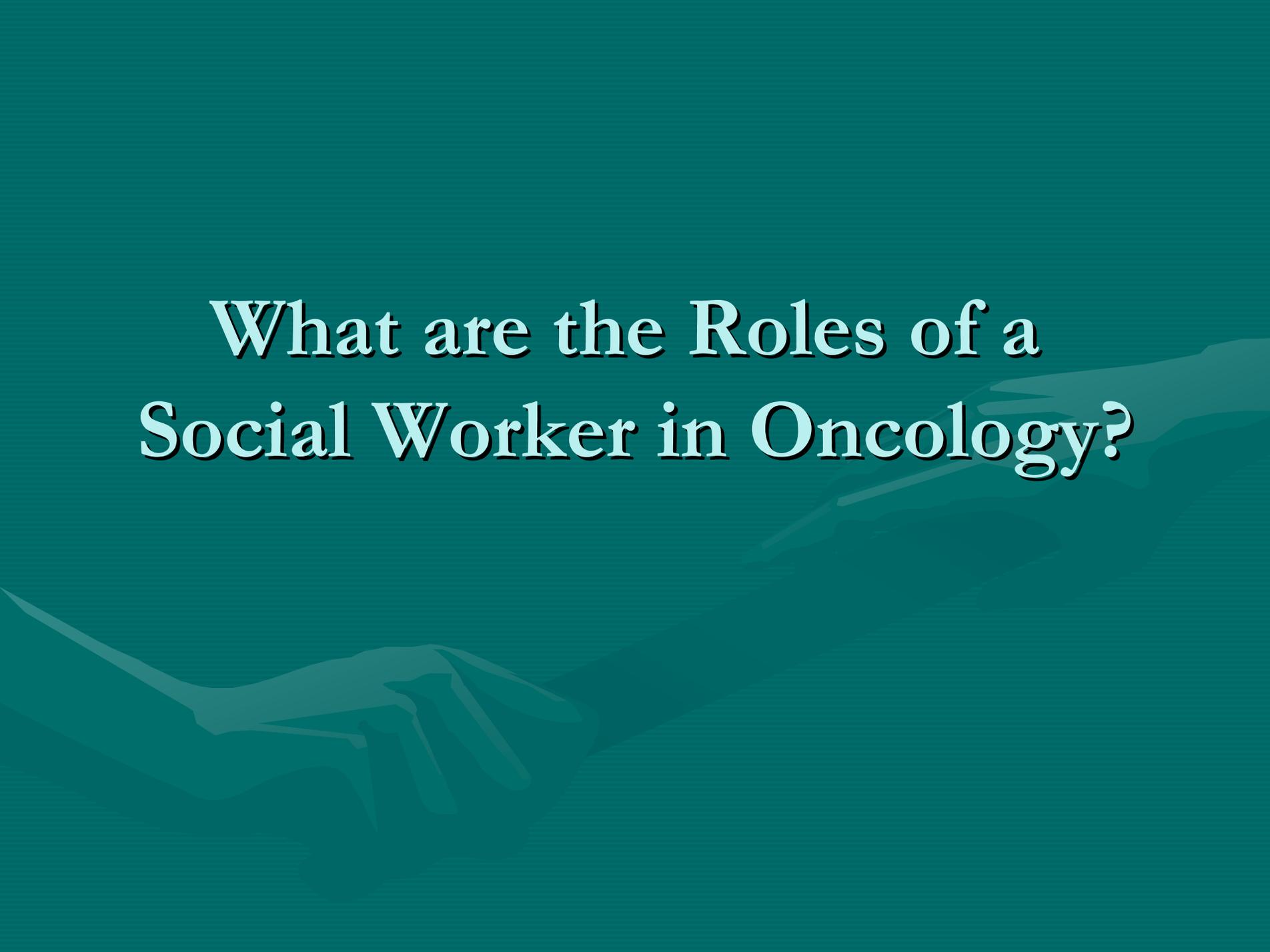
❖ Various Religions:

Islam (majority), Christian, Armenian

❖ Various Areas of Residence: East Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Gaza



What are the Roles of a Social Worker in Oncology?

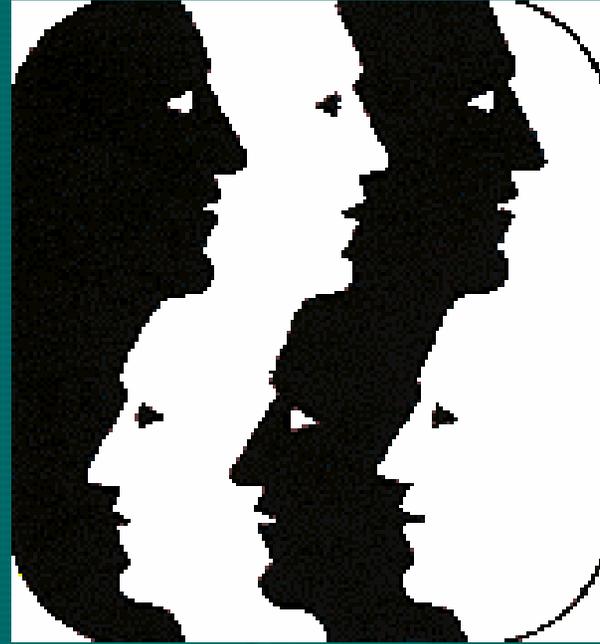


Social Work in the Oncology Day- Care Unit

- ❖ Psycho-social assessment
- ❖ Family support network
- ❖ Anxiety reduction
- ❖ Therapeutic interventions
- ❖ Coping mechanisms
- ❖ Advise and facilitate regarding receiving benefits

Social Work in the Breast Cancer Psycho-social Program

- ❖ Crisis intervention
 - ❖ Beginning at the time of diagnosis
 - ❖ Support before and after surgery



My Unique Role:

**An Arab Social Worker
In an
Israeli – Jewish Hospital**

My Work With Arabs

- ❖ Facilitate patient-staff communication
- ❖ Appreciate the unique beliefs and perceptions of the Arab population – the key for accurate, empathic and professional translation
- ❖ Respect of patient's beliefs and habits – the key for earning trust and feeling comfortable
- ❖ Advocating for the Arab patient

The Problems Inherent in the Role of an Arab Social Worker

- ❖ Multiple roles
- ❖ Role ambiguity
- ❖ Unclear limits

Overcoming the Problems

❖ Defining my role

❖ Facilitating patient independence

❖ Recognizing my positive impact

Arab Social Worker Treating Jewish Patients

- ❖ Don't ignore the conflict but NEVER let it get in the way of professional intervention
- ❖ Focus on the universal human emotions
- ❖ Emphasize “joining” on the most basic level
- ❖ Emphasize the goal: To help

With Whom Do I Work?



Our Oncology Staff

- ❖ 8 Oncology Specialists
- ❖ Nursing Staff
- ❖ 3 Social Workers
- ❖ 1 Psychiatry Specialist
- ❖ 1 Psycho-Oncologist
- ❖ Spiritual Care team
- ❖ Research Coordinator
- ❖ 1 Dietician
- ❖ 3 Secretaries
- ❖ 3 Volunteers

Oncologists



Social Workers



Palliative Care Physicians

**Palliative Care
Nurse**

**Research
Coordinator**

My Place Within the Staff as An Arab Social Worker

- ❖ Familiarity with the Jewish- Israeli culture, language and customs
- ❖ Sharing a common goal
- ❖ Mutual respect
- ❖ Informal relationships

In Conclusion.....

- ❖ Recognition of ethnic differences and possible problems
- ❖ Self-awareness
- ❖ Respect for ALL people



Professionalism

Thank You

