

Quick Reference Guide: Social Work Abstracts

Coverage

Social Work Abstracts, produced by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), indexes and abstracts articles in 450+ social work and related human services journals as well as books and dissertations from 1977-present.

Simple Searching

- Type term or phrase in the **Search** box. Select **Anywhere** (keyword), **in Subject**, **in Title**, or **in Author** from the **Find Terms:** box on the right. Use Boolean operators (**and**, **or**, **not**) to connect terms. Click on the **Search** button to complete search.
 - Field searching beyond subject, title, and author also can be conducted from the main **Search** box. Use the **in** operator to limit your search to a specific field. Searchable fields are those identified in the drop-down box on the **Advanced** search screen. Thus, to find records containing the title *Journal of Family Social Work*, type this: **Journal of Family Social Work in so** where **so** is the **Source** field containing journal publication information.
 - To view the full record (citation, abstracts, subject headings), click on **Complete Record** at the end of the entry.
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Advanced Searching

- Click the **Advanced** tab located over the **Search** box. Use **Advanced** search to combine search terms and specific record fields, including Author (AU), Title (TI), and Abstract (AB).
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Selecting Subject Search Terms

Notice that the **Thesaurus** tab located over the search box is gray; this means that no thesaurus is available. Furthermore, no subject or descriptor search field is listed among the options for an **Advanced** search. However, focused subject searches on a topic are possible.

Method #1

- Type a term or phrase that describes your topic and conduct a **Find Terms: Anywhere** search from the main **Search** screen. View the **Complete Record** of the retrieved items. When viewing these results, notice the terms/phrases that appear in the **Descriptors (DE)** field. Descriptors are subject headings that describe the publications indexed in *Social Work Abstracts*.
- Identify the descriptors most relevant to your topic. Return to the main **Search** screen and enter a descriptor in the **Search** box. Select **Subject** from the **Find Terms:** box on the right. Click on the **Search** button to complete search.

Method #2

- Using the **Index**, select **Descriptors (DE)** as the **Index to Search** option. Type your search term and click on the **Go to Term** button. If the term you entered matches the database controlled vocabulary, it will display in the resulting list. Check the box(es) of the displayed term(s) that meet your search needs and click on the **Search Marked** button. If you check more than one descriptor, the terms will be combined with the Boolean operator **OR**, which will retrieve records that contain either or both of the selected terms.

Method #3

- Type a term or phrase that describes your topic and click on the **Suggest** button below the **Search** box. The database will display a list of related subjects (i.e., descriptors) from its controlled vocabulary. Check the box(es) of the displayed term(s) or name(s) that meet your search needs. If you check more than one descriptor, the terms will be combined with the Boolean operator **OR**, which will retrieve records that contain either or both of the selected terms.
 - Click on the **Search Marked** button to search those terms/names and display the resultant records.
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Using the Index

The **Index** is an alphabetical list of all of the searchable terms in the database. Consult the index to find variations on authors' names, terms with variant spellings, or hyphenated phrases.

- Click on the **Index** tab located over the **Search** box. Select the **Index to Search** (options are General Index (keywords), Accession Number (AN), Descriptors (DE), and Publication Year (PY)). Type your search term or the author's last name and first initial. Click on the **Go to Term** button. Check the box(es) of the displayed term(s) or name(s) that meet your search needs. Click on the **Search Marked** button to search those terms/names and display the resultant records.

Search History

Click on the **Search History** tab over the **Search** box to view the component steps of your complete search. You may select individual search statements to combine using the Boolean operators **OR** or **AND**. Also, you may **Edit** or **Remove** individual search statements.

Truncation and Wildcards

Use an asterisk (*) to retrieve an unlimited number of characters at the end of a search term. This **truncates** the end of a word. For example, *crim** retrieves records containing the words *crime*, *criminal*, *criminology*, etc.

Use a question mark (?) as a **wildcard** that substitutes one character or none. For example, *labo?r* retrieves records containing the words *labor* or *labour* and *wom?n* retrieves *woman* and *women*.

Viewing Search Results

- To view a complete record: Among other fields, the **Complete Record** contains the citation, abstract, and descriptors for a publication. Following a search, click on **Complete Record** in the record display.
- To view previous searches: As searches are completed, they automatically are added to the **Search History**. Click on the **Search History** tab over the **Search** box to display the component steps of your search. Click on the **Display** icon corresponding to the search statement for which you wish to see the results.
- To change display options: When the search results are displayed, click on the **Change Display** button at the top of the window. Make the desired changes and click on the **OK** button.

Marking Records to Print, Save (Download), or Email

When viewing a list of records, click on the box to the left of the record so that a check mark (v) appears in the box. To unmark a record, click on the box again and the check mark will disappear.

Printing Records

- Click on the **Print** icon at the top right of the window. The **Print Options** window will open.
- Specify the records to print and the fields to include in the output. Click on the **Change Fields** button for more field options. It is highly recommended that you include both the **Search History** and **Record number and database name** in the output.
- Click on the **Print** button at the top of the database screen to engage the printer.

Saving (Downloading) Records

- Click on the **Save** icon at the top right of the window. The **Save Records to Disk** window will open.
- Specify the records to save and the fields to include in the output. Click on the **Change Fields** button for more field options. It is highly recommended that you include both the **Search History** and **Record number and database name** in the output.
- Click on the **Save** button at the top of the database screen to begin the process. Pull down the **Save in:** menu and select the **A: drive**. Replace the name in the **File name** box, followed by **.txt** extension. Click the **Save** button.

Emailing Records

- Click on the **Email** icon at the top right of the window. The **Send Mail** window will open.
- Enter your full email addresses for the sender and recipient (even if you are both) and a message subject.
- Specify the records to send and the fields to include in the output. Click on the **Change Fields** button for more field options. It is highly recommended that you include both the **Search History** and **Record number and database name** in the output, and that you select the **With word-wrapping** option.

Exiting the Database

To exit *Social Work Abstracts*, click on the **Logout** button at the top of the screen.