

So You Want to Be a Social Worker (Part 2)

LCCC Career Exploration Podcast

Music:	00:04	[Inaudible]
Jennifer Kukis:	00:05	Often the public really associates social work with Job and Family services and also with a Protective Services, but I don't know any of my friends who are Social Workers have ever worked there and I have never worked there.
Music:	00:21	[Inaudible]
Jennifer Kukis:	00:21	There is so many other places to work and there's also Social Workers in corporations, in police departments. Some States have started hiring them in libraries.
Music:	00:37	[Inaudible]
Janet Maltbie:	00:37	This is the Career Exploration podcast on LCCCradio.com, the Boom. I'm Janet Maltbie. We explore careers, college majors and more so you can be a success here on the LCCC campus and beyond. I'm a career counselor and I believe completing a degree pursuing passionate work and debt free living is key to your future. I'm here to help you on your journey and so are my guests.
Music:	01:00	[Inaudible].
Janet Maltbie:	01:01	In our previous podcast, we focused on the two year Human Services degree. In this podcast we will discuss the four year Bachelor's degree program in Social Work with my guests, Professor Jennifer Kukis and Academic Advisor, Arlena Lockard. Welcome back, Jennifer and Arlena.
Jennifer Kukis:	01:18	Thank you.
Janet Maltbie:	01:20	Jennifer, you've been at LCCC for 22 years,
Jennifer Kukis:	01:23	Correct.
Janet Maltbie:	01:24	And you're a licensed independent social worker who's worked as a medical Social Worker, a case manager for the elderly, a hospice worker and a grief counselor. What got you into this profession and what was the pull for you?

Jennifer Kukis: [01:40](#) I remember the moment that I decided to be a social worker. It's kind of a little story. I was in fifth grade and a social studies class and I had this teacher and I just remember I was just going on about women's rights and talking about that. And he stops and he says, Oh my God, you're just like my wife who's a social worker. And I thought, well, if she irritates him that much. That's what I want to be when I grow up. So I went home and told my mom I wanted to be a social worker, but I wasn't sure exactly what that was. And so she had a position in a hospital and made some inquiries and about a year or two later, I got to meet some social workers.

Janet Maltbie: [02:21](#) Sixth grade?

Jennifer Kukis: [02:21](#) Yeah. Yeah. And then she also found me some books to read. Um I know, I think it was Jimmy Carter's mother, I think it wasn't a social worker, but she was in the Peace Corps. And so she got me that book to read one summer. And then, you know, just help me find out more about social work.

Janet Maltbie: [02:40](#) Do you remember your first client?

Jennifer Kukis: [02:41](#) Well, I, I remember my internship, you know, that you do. It was at the emergency room at St. Vincent's hospital and I had not wanted to be in the emergency room. I didn't think they took Bachelor's degree students at that time and they hadn't. So they did a group interview and took us on tour and I wanted to be a medical social worker and I get my letter that I was accepted, but I'd be in the emergency room. And so I called her and said, I think there was a mistake.

Jennifer Kukis: [03:09](#) And she said, no, we're doing this the first time we think you'd be perfect. And I was like scared to death. And I said, well I wanted St. Vincent's, but I'd like another area. She says, I'm sorry it's the emergency room or not. And it turned out once I got adjusted. I loved it.

Janet Maltbie: [03:23](#) What did you love about it?

Jennifer Kukis: [03:24](#) Well, you know, the thing with social work is our, our whole background is helping the oppressed and the poor and making a difference. And I really saw a lot of elderly people using the emergency room as their healthcare and I think that really ended up helping me to work in the field of Gerontology. I had several jobs in that field at different organizations, but I, I liked I learned so much because I got to deal with all kinds of different

populations and I wasn't really sure what area I wanted to work in social work .

- Janet Maltbie: [03:58](#) What I find interesting about social work is the gamut. The range of things that you can, can you speak a little bit to that?
- Jennifer Kukis: [04:07](#) Um often the public and even students, we get an Intro to social work, really associated social work with Job and Family services and also with Protective Services. But I don't know any of my friends who are social workers have ever worked there and I have never worked there. There's so many other places to work. And there's also social workers in corporations, in police departments. Some states have started hiring them in libraries.
- Janet Maltbie: [04:34](#) Okay. And you have a little bit of background in the hospice, a as well on grief counseling. Right?
- Jennifer Kukis: [04:40](#) Right. Yeah, I worked for hospice and then ended up going with a group of people that started New Life hospice and then I was able to, to open up a Harvest Life Bereavement Center and became their Executive Director.
- Janet Maltbie: [04:52](#) That is not for everybody.
- Jennifer Kukis: [04:55](#) Um I have friends who have put their whole life into domestic violence and they feel that the way I feel about hospice and grief work. I never found hospice sad at all. But I would find domestic violence just, I couldn't do it. I mean as an every day job, but they don't feel that way. They had the reaction about hospice. Why I couldn't do that every day?
- Janet Maltbie: [05:24](#) Right.
- Jennifer Kukis: [05:24](#) So that's what's really what you said earlier about the gamut, that there is something for everybody who wants to be in this field,
- Janet Maltbie: [05:32](#) Right. So if there's an area that you work in and then you'd suddenly decide, you know, this is not for me, you have the social work license, then you can move to a different area.
- Jennifer Kukis: [05:42](#) Absolutely.
- Janet Maltbie: [05:43](#) You can go to a hospital or you could work in the schools or with the Veterans, Red Cross.
- Jennifer Kukis: [05:48](#) Right.

Janet Maltbie: [05:48](#) There's so many different, and that's one of the reasons.

Jennifer Kukis: [05:51](#) That's what I love about it.

Janet Maltbie: [05:51](#) Yeah, exactly.

Janet Maltbie: [05:53](#) Is Bachelor's degree enough in order to become a social worker?

Jennifer Kukis: [05:57](#) Yes and no. It depends on what you want to do. I think there's a, there's a lot more opportunities as specialization at the Master's degree level. And if you want to do a private practice or be in counseling, then you really have to have a Master's degree.

Janet Maltbie: [06:11](#) Right.

Jennifer Kukis: [06:11](#) But the first professional level is the bachelor's degree.

Janet Maltbie: [06:14](#) Okay. Arlena can you speak to the Partnership programs that we have on this campuses? Cleveland State , Akron, and there's YSU as well.

Arlena Lockard: [06:23](#) Right? So the YSU programs is are our only official Partnership for social work here. It was designed to be a dually admitted program. So what that means is students will start their first year of the four year program at LCCC. They'll take one whole year of only LCCC classes and then they will start YSU classes their second year. So they will take some classes with LCCC at the same time, they're taking some pre social work classes with YSU, but it'll all be at this campus.

Arlena Lockard: [06:56](#) So it's a great opportunity for a brand new student that is geographically bound to this area to get their Bachelor's. But again, it's depending upon when you come in and where you transfer. And if you meet the admissions requirements to YSU's pre social work program. It doesn't fit everybody's needs, but it is a really good program for those students that are just starting in and it really interested in getting a bachelor's of social work.

Janet Maltbie: [07:22](#) So they never need to leave this campus at all.

Arlena Lockard: [07:24](#) Correct.

Janet Maltbie: [07:24](#) For YSU all right. But there's these other programs too. Talk about the Akron program. Where is that?

- Arlena Lockard: [07:31](#) So the University of Akron does have a remote campus location in Lakewood. They're currently in the Lakewood high school, but they're moving out of Lakewood high school, but they're going to be still in Lakewood. So because of the location to Lakewood to our campus here, there are students that want to take the social work program through Akron. They're at that Lakewood campus. The difference between that and the YSU program is that the Akron program is accelerated. So instead of taking three years with YSU, you would be taking 18 months with Akron. So what happens is the students will complete two years or their Associate of Arts degree, however long it takes for them to get through the AA degree. And then as advisors, we make sure that we embed within that AA degree, those pre Social Work requirements that Akron needs. And if they hit that 2.75 GPA, then they can get admitted to their accelerated program. And so it's four semesters including summer and they can complete that program quicker.
- Janet Maltbie: [08:38](#) So, so that's particularly good for a student that wants to get through pretty quickly and they have the 2.7 GPA.
- Arlena Lockard: [08:45](#) They have to be high achieving, very motivated. They have to be able to handle that accelerated coursework. I found often students that come in with substantial transfer credits from another institution that honestly, that Akron program seems to be a better fit for them because if they've already done say two years at another institution, they don't want to do another three here. And so we're able to do maybe a semester of some bridge work to make sure they have those social work courses that they need for their AA. And then they can transfer out.
- Janet Maltbie: [09:15](#) And then there's the Cleveland state option.
- Arlena Lockard: [09:17](#) Corrections, right? And so other students that want to do more traditional two plus two can easily do the Cleveland State program. So if you look at all of those options, you could easily do an accelerated, you could do a two plus two or you could do the full partnership program with YSU. It's all available for students in this area.
- Janet Maltbie: [09:36](#) But I think the real key is for someone to come in and talk with you. Or a Human Services advisor and meet with somebody on the team so that they can make the right plan whether they're staying on this campus through YSU or going down to Akron. Actually it's Lakewood, but it's the University of Akron program and then the CSU program.
- Music: [10:04](#) [Inaudible]

Speaker 4:

[10:04](#)

Arlena and Jennifer, thank you so much for being with us today. If you're interested in becoming a Social Worker or completing a degree in any of our human or social service programs, call today to make an appointment to see Arlena or any of our Human Services team advisors. The number to call is (440) 366-4033. This program has been brought to you by the generous support of Enrollment, Financial, and Career Services. Who reminds you that it's not too late or too early to begin your career journey at Lorain County CommunityCollege. You've been listening to the LCCC Career Exploration podcast on college radio, heard round the world, LCCCradio.com, the Boom. I'm Janet Maltbie. Thanks for listening.

Music:

[10:45](#)

[inaudible].