Definition of “Clinical Social Work”

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) defines Clinical Social Work as follows: “Clinical social work shares with all social work practice the goal of enhancement and maintenance of psychosocial functioning of individuals, families and small groups. Clinical social work practice is the professional application of social work theory and methods to the treatment and prevention of psychosocial dysfunction, disability, or impairment, including emotional and mental disorder. It is based on knowledge of one or more theories of human development within a psychosocial context. Clinical social work services consist of assessment; diagnosis; treatment, including psychotherapy and counseling; client-centered advocacy; consultation; and evaluation. The process of clinical social work is undertaken within the objectives of social work and the principles and values contained in the NASW Code of Ethics” (NASW, 1999).