

**Conveying Hope to Every Client**  
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*“You are a life worth saving,” proclaimed a large and colorful sign on the wall. The young man confessed to his social worker that he liked to sit under the sign because he felt safe there. The words reminded him that his life could have meaning. In this place, he felt the power to push forward despite many missteps and unsettling memories. With caring souls around him, he knew the words were more than letters on paper. Their essence was palpable.*

The instillation of hope is one of the first and most meaningful steps for social workers in the establishment of a successful therapeutic relationship. A sense of hope is invaluable to a client about to make the frightening step from the known into the unknown. A social worker embodies the words “You are a life worth saving” every time she meets with a client and sits with him in his discomfort. We convey hope when we treat our clients like people, when we let them know that how they feel and what they want out of life is important. Social workers convey hope when we acknowledge the humanity in the people around us, when we recognize both their woundedness and their strength.

To a survivor of childhood physical, sexual or emotional abuse: “That never should have happened to you; you are not to blame.” To someone desperate to overcome a devastating drug or alcohol use disorder: “Your life doesn’t have to be like this. Things can get better.” To someone fleeing an abusive relationship: “I commend your bravery. There is help here.” To a child, to a parent, to an older person crossing a bridge she has never crossed before: “You have

the skills within you. We will find them, or we will build them.” And to each and every client who comes through our doors: “We will find a way through this together.”

Because social workers convey hope to every client, every day, social work is *the* profession of hope.