

My name is Kasidy Stevenson, I am a Social Worker with the Multilingual & Multicultural Center for Portland Public Schools. In my MSW program, I became an intern with Portland Public Schools through the Multilingual & Multicultural department. I met amazing bilingual social workers, one of which is Priscila Bitencourt, who was and continues to be my mentor and now colleague. As we have heard from Priscila, she has attempted and failed this exam 6 times because of a language barrier.

I was disappointed, but not shocked, to hear that the data shows that this exam is upholding systemic racism, as many standardized tests have proven to do. Yet, I sought the field of social work over any other form of mental health provider certification because I believed in the code of ethics that says social justice must be part of what we do. This especially includes use needing to acknowledge injustice within our own profession. I have heard people share stories that this test is a barrier because they speak other languages, have ADHD, dyslexia or a many of the other factors that could make this test impossible to pass. We need diverse social workers that represent the real life diversity that exists.

Other reasons the the exam is not accessible, include the fee of \$230. If you choose to access exam prep courses and materials that easily adds on a couple hundred more each try. The amount of time that must be spent to study. The exams are difficult to schedule and often result in people having to drive across state lines and take off a day from work to attempt the test and then there is a minimum wait time of 3 months between exams.

This exam does not ask people to practice skills of empathy or advocacy or confidentiality. The exam takes the field of social work, which is incredibly subjective and we are taught to think in the gray, .. boils it down into 170 objective, black and white, multiple choice questions.

I cannot speak to the story of every individual that is excluded by this test, but I can speak some on Priscila Bitencourt. She is not only an exceptional social worker, but an incredible human being. She somehow manages to stress of supporting all the McKinney-Vento student sin the Portland district while still showing up with homemade brazilian foods or candies as office treats for all her coworkers, she finds a way to make sure all three of her own children succeed in academics and athletics, she volunteers for nonprofits outside of work without telling anyone and is always the first person in the office in the morning. She has taught me more about being a social worker than any book in my MSW ever did. Whenever I have a social work ethics question or need to know a resource or just need to understand a system better, the first person I call is Priscila. She continues to train and support me in becoming a better social worker even though the field has denied her access. That is the type of person that this test is excluding. Thank you so much for your time.