

# Social workers debunk the myths about how they help patients heal

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Working side by side with physicians and nurses, social workers are instrumental in supporting patients, families, and communities. [Research](#) has found that social workers can help reduce emergency room visits, length of hospital stays, and hospital readmission rates.

"For over a century, [social workers](#) have proven essential to promoting health, enhancing hope and improving health care outcomes," said Teresa Moro, LCSW, a health services researcher in social work and [community health](#) at RUSH.

Most social workers practicing at RUSH have a master's degree, with many going on to complete two years of additional training to become licensed clinical social workers who can provide [mental health](#) counseling in virtually any setting.

Despite their long history in health care, there is much more to a social worker's role than is generally known. The Social Work and Community Health Department team debunks some common myths about their work in health care:

### **Myth #1: Social workers just connect patients to resources**

While resource connection is an essential component of a social worker's responsibility, it is the meaningful connections that make all the difference. Social workers don't simply supply information; they learn what matters most to patients and families to provide resources that allow them to live their healthiest lives. Licensed clinical social workers conduct nuanced, comprehensive assessments that maximize a patient's engagement in their own care.

## **Myth #2: Social workers are not health care workers**

As essential members of the health care team, social workers contribute to improved health for individuals, families, and communities. Social workers partner with patients and their caregivers to help them plan for their future care needs and secure essential resources like social support, housing, food, and transportation. They also provide emotional support, counseling, and advocacy—addressing not just their [patients'](#) physical health needs but also the mental, emotional and [environmental factors](#) that affect health.

## **Myth #3: Social workers are needed only for dire situations**

Being in the hospital or receiving a scary diagnosis can be life-changing for anyone. Many people can benefit from a check-in to see how they are doing and to make sure they have the tools they need to ensure that their treatment is aligned with their goals. This allows them to focus on their health and recovery.

Provided by Rush University Medical Center

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