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## The Occupational Social Worker's Unique Role in Contributing to the Sustainable Development

### Goals

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### Abstract

Most traditional social work roles require social workers to focus on assisting and strengthening children, families and communities. Yet through the years in some countries, the scope of social work has expanded significantly to see social workers operating in different sectors, which include settings such as medical, education and corporate spheres. Occupational social work is a special area in social work, where professional services are offered to both employees and organizations to promote wellness, justice and diversity in the workplace. Moreover, to ensure the development and sustainability of organisations, employees need to work in environments that are conducive to optimal productivity and in which harmonious and respectful relationships are nurtured and promoted. According to the United Nations, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the eighth Sustainable Development Goal is to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all” (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015). This presentation will highlight how occupational social workers are ideally positioned to contribute to creating a healthy work environment through assessing and enhancing optimal relationships between the various systems within organizations. Reflecting on the South African landscape, the authors draw on their knowledge and experiences in promoting and supporting the well-being of both the employees and the employer. The challenges and opportunities of this role will be presented, as occupational social workers continue to navigate and gain credibility in areas which are not traditional to social work.

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