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# The One Hundred-Year Debate: Social Reform versus Individual Treatment

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## Abstract

This article discusses the 100-year-old debate about the primary or sole function of the social work profession: to seek social reform or to provide

individual treatment. The basic premise of the article is that these need not be mutually exclusive and divisive, but rather that the two should frame and highlight the unique strength of the social work profession. The argument is made that these perspectives are increasingly evident in social work education and social work practice and that voices must be raised if we forget or ignore either of these elements. A “debate” format is used to illustrate these points.

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