

# **Veliska Thomas**

**Adjunct Lecturer at USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work**

Los Angeles, CA, US

Clinical social work expert, focusing on human behavior in the social environment

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## **Biography**

Veliska Thomas joined the social work adjunct faculty in 2016, teaching courses on human behavior and the social environment and clinical practice with service members and veterans. She previously taught at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

A licensed clinical social worker, she currently serves as a psychotherapist to patients with Alzheimer's disease, dementia and other co-occurring medical/mental health issues in long-term care facilities through Wellness Solutions Geriatrics. She has also worked in private practice, providing counseling services to individuals, groups and families at Restoration Counseling Services and Volunteer Behavioral Healthcare Systems. As a Bachelor of Social Work-level practitioner, Thomas worked as a case manager at Children's Home/Chambliss Shelter, as a corrections officer at Silverdale Detention Center, and as a court appointed special advocate and auxiliary probation officer for Hamilton County Juvenile Court in Ohio.

She also has practice and research experience in leadership, political advocacy and community practice. She co-authored an article in Social Work that addressed political activities of social workers and perceived barriers to political participation. She held office as branch chair of Southeast Tennessee's National Association of Social Workers, served on the Chattanooga Organized for Action steering committee and worked as a student intern under the deputy regional administrator for the Southeast Regional Office of Tennessee's Department of Children's Services.

Thomas' research focus on military veteran community reintegration has provided her with the opportunity to conduct program evaluations for the Tennessee Veterans Business Association and coordinate a research team at UT College of Social Work. She continues to research and publish in this area with her most recent publication in the Journal of Social Service Research titled "Sense of Community: Is it a protective factor for military veterans?"

She was recognized as the Southeast Tennessee Region Master of Social Work Student of the Year and Tennessee State NASW Graduate Student of the Year. She was also inducted into the Phi Alpha Honor Society.

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## **Industry Expertise**

Mental Health Care, Program Development, Social Services, Research, Education/Learning, Public Policy, Health and Wellness

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## **Areas of Expertise**

Political Advocacy , Veteran Mental Health, Counseling Services and Volunteer Behavioral Healthcare Systems

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## **Education**

**University of Tennessee**  
PhD Social Work

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## **Accomplishments**

**MSW Student of the Year**  
Awarded by the Southeast Tennessee Region

**NASW Graduate Student of the Year**  
Awarded by Tennessee State

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