



















18 ADINKRA SYMBOLS RELEVANT TO SOCIAL WORK AND DEVELOPMENT

Name & literal meaning	Symbol	Meaning
Sankofa Go back and get it <i>Se wo were li na wosan kofa a yenkyiri</i>		Meaning: It is not taboo to go back for what you forgot or left behind) <i>Importance of history and philosophy in social work, look back to inform the past.</i>
Mate Masie I have heard and kept it.		Confidentiality <i>This is a key principle of casework, counselling and psychotherapy.</i>
Bese Saka A bunch of kola-nut.		Economic well-being, affluence and authority over other people and nations. <i>Socio-economic development.</i>
Fawohodie Grab yours		Independence, freedom, self-determination, autonomy & emancipation. <i>In social work this means decolonisation</i>
Gye Nyame Only God or except God		Spirituality <i>Spirituality in social work.</i>
Fihankra House or compound		The communal housing compound has only one entrance and exit. <i>Social security and safety.</i>
Akoma The heart		From the proverb 'He or she has a heart in their stomach' <i>Acceptance, patience, tolerance.</i>
Funtunfunafu Siamese crocodiles, one stomach.		Crocodiles fighting over food when eating. <i>Unity in diversity</i>
Hwemudua A stick which is used in looking into something.		When something is well examined, its content is well known. <i>Importance of critical reflection in social work.</i>
Adinkrahene King of the Adinkra symbols		Authority, leadership, and charisma. <i>Management and administration</i>
Duafe Wooden comb		Care, cleanliness and natural beauty. <i>Appreciating women, femininity and culture.</i>
Asase Ye Duru The earth has weight		The earth or environment provides, sustains and is divine. <i>Environmental social work.</i>
Ayampatapo Knot of reconciliation		Tying cloth or rope around two people's hands is a sign of reconciliation. <i>Reconciliation and peace-making.</i>
Nyame Dua A cross-section of a palm tree, or the top of a tree stump.		Acknowledgment of the presence of God. <i>Spirituality through God was there in Africa before Abrahamic religion (Christian and Islamic faith) colonised Africa's religion.</i>
Ananse ntonan Anansi the spider web, well-known in West Africa folklore		Wisdom, creativity and the complexities of life <i>Creativity</i>
Owia kokroko Greatness of the sun		The sun is the ultimate source of all life and vitality on Earth. <i>Africa's renewal and renaissance</i>
Boa me na me mmoa wo Help me and let me help you		The two sides are asymmetrical, but they work together as a whole. <i>Cooperation, collectivity, communality, collaboration and wholism.</i>
Denkyem Crocodile		From the proverb 'the crocodile lives in water, yet breathes the air'. <i>Cleverness and adaptability.</i>