

Phone: 6262333155



EMail: principal@cmdpgcollege.ac.in

Website: www.cmdpgcollege.ac.in

(ESTD.1956)

C.M. DUBEY POST GRADUATE COLLEGE, BILASPUR (C.G)

(Accredited 'B+' Grade by NAAC)

An Affiliated College of Atal Bihari Vajpayee Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur (Chhattisgarh)

2.2.1

The institution assesses the learning levels of the students and organizes special Programmes for advanced learners and slow learners

BRIDGE COURSE:

https://cmdpgcollege.ac.in/Uploads/BRIDGE%20COURSE_2024092111757.pdf

REMEDIAL COURSE:

https://cmdpgcollege.ac.in/Uploads/REMEDIAL%20COURSE_2024092111905.pdf

S.No.: Circular CMD/ /

In fields of learning, it is expected that theories and practice should be complementary and inter-dependent. History has shown that most theories are developed from practice, precisely from closely observed experiences of people with their environments overtime (Ebue & Agwu, 2017). The essence of practice is to further validate theories, and as well improve on them. Social work discipline is no exception to this development, hence the introduction of field work practice as a prerequisite for the fulfillment of the award of diploma or higher degrees in the discipline. Field work practice helps students integrate theoretical classroom learning with practical experiences, so as to be clear on the realities of theories in real life experiences. Littrel (1980) asserted that field work practice helps us to sharpen and develop skills which will make us more effective and efficient in dealing with our clients and helping to solve their various problems.

The profession of social work is too delicate. Becoming a professional social worker cannot just happen by only sitting in a class. The nature of the profession which is to engage human welfare does not permit such kind of training. Invariably, social workers in training spend more time at fields than classrooms. To engage an orphan or a vulnerable child, or a prison inmate, and have his or her welfare met, the social worker must have to do so physically and not just

stay in a class telling stories and reading up such experiences. In fact, the more field experiences social workers have, the more they could tell how competent they are. Thus, in social work, practice wisdom has become a major source of knowledge base (Teater, 2010). By practice wisdom, one implies experiences gotten overtime through first hand engagement with several cases of clients. All of these have contributed to the reason why social work learning and studies all over the globe lay special emphasis on field work experiences.

Field work practice in social work aligns with the objectives and purpose of the social work profession. This is because it facilitates the dexterity of professionals to develop skills and capacities to regularly, effectively, and objectively deal with life situations obtainable in the society (Ekpe and Mamah 1997, Morale Sheafor and Scolt, 2010). Specifically, the objectives of social

I

9

Field work practice in social work

105

work which are likewise the tenets guiding fieldwork practice can be summarized thus:
opportunities.

Further, to fulfill the above tenets guiding fieldwork practice, the following tasks should be well attended:

problem solving model.

various social policies or influencing most social policies from its formative stage.

conscientizing the society for an effective utilization of available human and materials resources.

environments through rehabilitation, reconciliation, and re-integration, where and when necessary.

the people through helping them to achieve self-reliance.

Dimensions/settings and categories of clients served during fieldwork

The clientele base of social workers during typical Nigerian fieldwork experiences include: troubled families, STD infected persons, the oppressed, the poor, the unemployed, law offenders, pregnant teenagers, abusers of substance, abandoned children, victims of discrimination and social exclusion, undeveloped/underdeveloped communities, mentally ill persons, children with poor academic performance, people living with disabilities, among others.

These various categories of persons can be found in various settings. They include: communities, legal or correctional institutions, remand homes, social welfare agencies, schools, mental health facilities, markets, industries, organizations, etc. There is this saying that whenever two persons meet, the next

person who makes the third is a social worker. This is because, the presence of humans implies the potential of problems. Solving these problems demand the expertise of the third person who is the social worker. For further learning, the different agencies where social workers serve and the kind of problems obtainable in them will be discussed.

Ajibo, Mbah, & Anazonwu

106

Hospital

In Nigeria, social workers practice in hospitals. Particularly, hospitals owned and managed by the Federal Government. The interest of social workers is to pay attention to the psychosocial issues of clients, while the doctors and medical teams solve problems that involve chemotherapy. They are complementary to doctors, and emphasize psychosomatic issues. The distinctiveness of social work in health settings is that people served are clients rather than patients, which implies that the social worker could still see them as capable of changing the ill situation. The focus of work is on the psychosocial effects, causes and sustenance of illness, and not just the illness in itself (Flack, 2008).

School

Social workers also practice in schools. They work with students/pupils, teachers and parents to ensure that the objectives of school education are fulfilled. They also focus on students with learning disabilities and those who engage behaviours not compatible with the objectives of education, like truancy, cultism, unwholesome relationships, etc. School social workers work with pupils/students at all grade levels whose academic struggles impact their school progress negatively. They may consult with parents, guardians, teachers, and other support staff to find solutions for struggling children. School social workers are often called upon in situations of child abuse or neglect to navigate legal channels and serve as a liaison with outside agencies (Social Work Guide, 2018).

Psychiatry

Psychiatric social workers exists. They provide mental health services to individuals with mental health problems, especially those in psychiatric facilities. Social workers in psychiatric settings engage responsibilities like intake of inpatients, repatriation and discharge of service users, psychosocial assessments of inpatients, equipping inpatients with social skills, reconciling inpatients with systems around, among other tasks that would make rehabilitation and reintegration effective. The goal is to ensure that the person has resources to function independently and optimally within the community after discharge. They are in frequent contact with the family members of patients, and facilitate other professionals involve in the care and protection of

the client. If the patient is involved in legal procedures, the social worker may have a role in information gathering (Social Work Licensure, 2018).

Organizational settings

Social work field practice experience in industries include government and private owned establishments such as social welfare agencies, banks, insurance companies, courts, government parastatals, telecommunication companies, industries, and firms. Here, social workers enhance mutual relationship and understanding between employers and employees. They also advocate for Field work practice in social work

107

adequate welfare of the employees through workplace policies, rules and regulations. Social workers beyond the work place ensure wellbeing of family members of employees and employers, because the conditions of their families could as well affect their productivity. Industrial social work is a vital area of social work practice which is concerned with making organizations efficient, as well as stimulating productive relationships among everyone directly or indirectly connected to the industry (Dileep, 2006). At social welfare agencies in Nigeria, social workers attend more to marital disputes, and help them seek social and legal redress. They work collaboratively with the legal practitioner who is made to head the agency.

Old people's home

and emotional wellbeing through adequate care. Social workers are employed in homes for the elderly and they perform a number of functions which include, helping older adults adjust to life in their new residences, advocating for their clients' needs and rights, providing supportive counseling and making psychosocial assessments/interventions (Miller, 2018).

Motherless babies' homes

or have been abandoned by their mothers are kept. In majority of the cases these children have fathers but the fathers believe that the children will be better taken care of by mother figures, who are often present at motherless babies' homes. of 1 to 6 years. Social workers ensure the wellbeing of the children through facilitating funds for the children's up keep, and securing foster placements for them where necessary. In the event of situations having parents coming to claim children, social workers become involved in the reconciliatory process, as well as legal redress.

Orphanage

Orphanage is a home where children who have lost any or all of their parents stay. Social workers ensure the physical and psychological wellbeing of the children through facilitating and procuring resources that will be used to take care of them. Social workers also ensure adequate assessment and evaluation of

parents who come for adoption, so as to make sure that the security of children is provided. Social workers in orphanage homes ensure that the needs of children are being met, and safety standards are implemented. So they conduct intermittent inspections (Xennial, 2018).

Ajibo, Mbah, & Anazonwu

108

Community

Social workers work with communities, their members and leadership. They are to ensure the overall wellbeing of the community through addressing pressing problems along the principles of felt needs. Social workers link the community to government and non-government agencies in order to facilitate developmental projects.

Levels of social work field practice

Social work field practicum takes place within three levels, which are micro, mezzo and macro. The levels are detailed below.

Micro

Micro social work practice involves practice with individuals and families (Social Work Guide, 2018). It is also known as social case work. This is a situation whereby a social worker handles a client case at individual level rather than in group or at community level. In addition, micro practice is the most common kind of social work practice. In micro social work, the social worker engages with individuals or families to solve problems. Common examples include helping individuals to find appropriate housing, health care and social services. Family therapy and individual counseling would also fall under the auspices of micro practice (Social Work License Map, 2017).

Mezzo

Mezzo social work practice involves social work practice with groups. It is also known as group work. This is a situation whereby the social worker handles problems of clients in a group setting. Such groups include, neighborhoods, task forces, and support groups (Social Work Guide, 2018).

Macro

This is social work practice with the community. It is also known as community development. This is a situation whereby the community as a whole forms social work client base. The social worker works with the community and not for the community to solve a particular problem that perturbs the community. Furthermore, macro social work practice involves working with agencies, organizations, communities, and large groups of people (Gillies, 2014).

Expectations from students in their various field work placement agencies. In preparation for the professional practice, students usually while at school undergo two phases of training, theoretical classroom orientation and practical field work orientation. In the usual classroom instructions, theoretical issues are taught to students with a view of developing their skills in preparation for practice. They are often assigned to agencies to acquire practical knowledge,

Field work practice in social work

109

skills and to test and put into practice what they have learnt in the classroom. This is akin to internship programmes, and forms a huge part of their grading.

A combination of both training systems prepare students for effective professional practice. Of course, most students don't always know or have refused to imbibe the culture of this all important aspect of social work education – field practice. This could be due to ignorance, perhaps of what they are expected to do at the agencies of placement, and how to go about them in practice. Little do they know that field work orientation is the most essential and even the most enjoyable part of their training. Also, students tend not to know how to apply rudimentary knowledge in dealing with the different categories of their clientele in line with the ethics, values and knowledge base of their profession (Okoye, 2014). At times, they fall out with their field supervisor, their clientele and among themselves either by omission or commission. This is not what it should be.

Whenever the narrative above happens, it shows that such students lack proper understanding or knowledge of theoretical issues taught them in class before the field assignments. Hence, it is always necessary to bring to the knowledge of students the procedures of taking on cases at agencies. No doubt that dealing with humans could be difficult and delicate as well. As social workers-in-training, it is important to see through three conceptual lenses in intervening with people in their placement agencies. The first is to see through himself by assessing and identifying his weaknesses, competencies and strengths. Second is to see through the eyes of the profession, which entails being knowledgeable to the core with the ethics and values of the profession. This calls for a proper understanding of the knowledge base of social work, its purpose, goals and dimensions. And lastly is to see through the eyes of the people and agency he is designated to work with. This calls for a good understanding of the ethics and values of the agency, and his expectations there.

Field work report

Field work report is a crucial aspect of social work field practice. A social worker or student social worker working with any form of clientele system is expected to write a comprehensive field work report detailing his activities with the client which also must be kept confidential.