

MSW-007
CASE WORK AND
COUNSELLING: WORKING
WITH INDIVIDUALS

Block

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Expert Committee

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Delhi

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Expert Committee (Revision)

Prof. Gracious Thomas
School of Social Work
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Department of Social Work
Kurukshetra University

Dr. Bishnu Mohan Dash
B.R. Ambedkar College
Delhi University

Dr. N. Ramya
School of Social Work
IGNOU, New Delhi

COURSE PREPARATION TEAM

Unit Writer
Prof. Archana Dassi

Block Editor
Dr. Joseph Xavier

**Course Editor &
Programme Coordinator**
Prof. Gracious Thomas

COURSE PREPARATION TEAM (Revision)

Unit Writer
Prof. Archana Dassi

Course Editor
Prof. Sushma Batra
University of Delhi, Delhi

Programme Coordinator
Dr. Saumya

Print Production

Mr. Kulwant Singh
Assistant Registrar (Publication)
School of Social Work

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

This course MSW-007 “Case Work and Counselling: Working with Individuals” has four blocks.

In the first block on “Human Behaviour and Social Environment” you will learn about social case work practice in India and how case work is related to individual behaviour. You will also study about the term personality and various aspects associated with it.

The second block, “Social Case Work” deals with the techniques required of case worker to help the client to confront a problem. It also elaborates on the process of social case work and the tools for practicing social case work.

The third block on “Basics of Counselling” will introduce you to the concept of counseling, its goals, theories and models of practice. You will come to know about the Supportive and behavioural techniques in counselling and the cognitive and psychoanalytical techniques widely being used by Practitioners.

In the fourth block, “Interviewing and Recording” you will study about Interviewing and different aspects of interviewing like need, technique and process. You will also learn about communication, recording and documentation in social case work.

After going through all the blocks, you will have a very good understanding of social case work and the role of a case worker in helping the client to confront his/her situation.

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BLOCK INTRODUCTION

This block on “Human Behaviour and Social Environment” is the first block of MSW-007. It has four units.

The first unit: “Social Case Work Practice in Indian Context” will enable you to understand human beings in the context of the progressive Indian society. You will also be able to establish the relationship between case work and individual behaviour and the trends in case work practice in India.

In the second unit titled “Behavioural Concepts for Understanding the Clients”, certain aspects of personality and factors influencing personality have been discussed elaborately.

The third unit on “Scope of Social Case Work” deals with the nature of problems that can be addressed through social case work and the fields of case work practice.

The fourth unit: “Components of Case Work” elaborates on the specific components of social case work.

After going through all the four units, you will be able to have a basic idea of what is social case work and some of the settings in which one can practice this primary method of social work.

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UNIT 1 SOCIAL CASE WORK PRACTICE IN INDIAN CONTEXT

Contents

**Archana Dassi*

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Understanding Human Being
- 1.3 Modern Society and Social Work
- 1.4 Social Case Work and Individual Behaviour
- 1.5 Social Case Work Practice in India
- 1.6 Indigenization of Case Work Practice
- 1.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.8 Further Readings and References

1.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit is designed to provide you basic understanding of social casework practice in Indian context. After studying this unit you would be able to:

- understand human being in the context of modern society;
- understand social casework and individual behaviour;
- know the trends in social casework practice in India; and
- understand the extent of indigenization of casework practice.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Social casework is one of the primary methods of working with individuals in human welfare organizations to help clients cope more efficiently with their problems in the context of their social functioning. It enables individuals to deal with their problems in a systematic manner based on the knowledge of human behaviour and various other tested approaches. It helps in developing more satisfying relations within their environment.

Social casework as a method of social work has emerged from the time of industrialization and its concomitant urbanization. It is the offspring of charity organization societies movement which was introduced in late 1870s. In this unit you should be able to understand the social and psychological explanation of human behaviour, role of casework in managing problems of persons in modern society and how casework is perceived by the practitioners in India.

1.2 UNDERSTANDING HUMAN BEING

Human life is a bio-psycho-social phenomenon and derives meaning only in the context of social living. A person is to be understood as a member of the society sharing commonly with other fellow members the life experiences. His/her behaviour is dynamic and has a tendency to act and react with equally dynamic

socio-cultural situation. The development of his/her personality, therefore, is closely linked with his/her total environment, his/her past experiences and future expectations.

Socially, Persons are essentially individuals who are physically, intellectually and emotionally unequal and belong to different cultures, have different capacities, motives, responses and tastes. They have the most dissimilar habits of mind and they nourish their own aspirations. Born and brought up in varied social conditions, they have in them distinct political affinities, religious and cultural backgrounds. One can reasonably guess the outer and inner forces which influence the spectrum of human and social relationships, but one can not possibly standardize persons and control the social situation in which they live. Though social controls are manifested in their lives through codes and sanctions such as associational, communal, moral and legal they are not entirely a slave to them. The individuals have some initiative, some determination, some independence of judgment and some strength of character.

Psychologically, human relationship are intangible, invisible and complex, and many a mode of mind or feeling of love, affection, anxiety, distress, frustration, incapacity and the like are very much *personal* in nature. On the other hand, a person's relationship with his/her environment is extremely intimate. In a sense, the socio-cultural traditions have an all-pervading impact on a person's behaviour; it is more than a "conditioning factor" of life.

It is well known that industrial civilization created a new environment which was hitherto unknown to human history. It modified the political structure, economic organisation, social institutions and cultural traditions and added to the complexities of human and social problems. Besides, the increased mobility of modern life and its inherent instability of the social structure has created conditions of anxiety and strain. The personality of an individual depends upon the pulls of the internal and the environmental factors. The adjustment may generally be achieved by a series of adaptations between the individual and his/her social surroundings. The difficulty however arises when he/she lacks the ability to change himself/herself to meet the conditions, or when he/she feels that the situations are too unyielding or too demanding.

Many a time client's lack of resources, ignorance of facts, emotional difficulties and lack of proper thinking create difficulties for a person to help him/her to solve the problems or meet the situation effectively.

1.3 MODERN SOCIETY AND SOCIAL WORK

In the modern society, all men and women, young and old, adolescent and mature, sick and handicapped, are facing challenges in their lives and are struggling hard with them to adjust. Some are poorly fed, others are badly housed, living in dilapidated conditions, many are without needed education, health care and basic amenities. The situation has become more complicated, with industrialization and urbanization. Urban family has tended to be part of an extended family group rather than what may be called a nuclear family. Mental illness and emotionally imbalances have also raised their ugly heads. In family relations, whether marital, parental, domestic or social, the economic, psychological and moral factors have influenced the total situation in varying degrees. The social institutions, cultural traditions and religious ideas in their entire kaleidoscopic panorama are also seen

at play, influencing the individual and contributing to the maladjustment. In such a situation, the symptoms are: the person is permeated by a sense of inadequacy, of confusion and self doubt, of worthlessness, of aimlessness, of having no place in this society, no direction in which to go, no goal. He is pervaded by a melancholic sense of futility, inability to 'take hold', or by a restless, directionless pursuit of questions for which he can find no answers like why it is only me who is unhappy in life? And what is the purpose of my life?

Social work stands among several helping professions that affirm the importance of the individual human being and the importance of the inner space – whether that inner space is within one person or within the group or family or within the community. Social workers attempt to channelise men's, group's, or families' energies with confidence so that they can lead their life with a sense of worth and dignity and purpose. This is why social workers remain intent upon helping people whose life-circumstances affect their lives. All social work interventions are socially and culturally determined. Similarly, social work can be practiced successfully in a democratic society. Case Work in the West, especially in U.S.A emphasizes on the individual's right to assistance, right to self-determination and the right to self-fulfillment. It offers greater opportunities of fulfillment and self-expression that is possible in a society which encourages conformity to group norms. It is believed that the latter type of society especially in India, the individual does not have full right to express himself/herself, to decide upon an action he/she would like to undertake or which is capable of being undertaken. Social casework practice, the goal of which is to enable the individual to lead a personally satisfying life, is not very much possible in the same manner (as in the west) in the Indian society. In India where group and community is given primary importance over the individuals, the client may not have the right to individualize.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) What is the social and psychological explanation of human behaviour?

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- 2) What is the role of casework in managing problems of persons in modern society?

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1.4 SOCIAL CASE WORK AND INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOUR

Social work especially social casework has its roots in charity and derives its inspiration out of the human sentiment of duty towards one's fellow beings. An attitude to help others is a commendable attribute of human character. But across time and space, it has been seen that some sections of the society have provided assistance to the needy in terms of material goods without recognizing the worth of the individual. In such a situation it was felt that the individual who was in need is solely responsible for his own conditions through his /her negligence, ignorance or incapacity. The basic premise was to meet the need as sparingly as possible, relief was not to be attractive enough to tempt people to try to take undue advantage of it.

Gradual insight into the nature of social problems made people realize that in all the cases it is not the individual who is entirely responsible for his/her condition. There were factors that were beyond an individual's control. This led to the whole thinking of social justice that seeks to give each individual his/her due in terms of opportunity and growth. The client has an un-obligated right to these services because he/she needs them. S/he has a freedom to accept or reject services as per her / his discretion.

1.5 SOCIAL CASE WORK PRACTICE IN INDIA

Social casework practitioners in India view the concepts of casework differently. According to them, social casework can be practiced successfully in a democratic society only. In the context of social casework practice, democracy implies freedom and self-fulfillment. In the Indian context the concept of self fulfillment and self expression go hand in hand with the concept of conformity to the group norm. It is believed that an individual does not have a right to express himself/herself, to decide upon an action he/she will like to undertake or which he/she is capable of undertaking. In Indian society the individual remains, more or less, a participating member bound to his/her original group. His/her group teaches him/her how he/she should restrain himself/herself and what characteristics he/she should suppress in order to be acceptable to other members. He/she can be rejected or ridiculed by his/her group if he/she does not conform to the social norms. In other words, in Indian context, the client will not have the *right to individualism* or the *right to self determination*.

Indian tradition does not primarily seem to subscribe to the concept of right. The concept of duty to one's fellow beings has run through ages. In his/her relation to the rest of the society, the Indian scheme lays stress upon his/her duties – dharma by which he/she is to secure his/her own advancement and thus he/she may be distinguished from his/her western counterpart who emphasizes his/her rights. Although, one implies the other, right emphasizes power and comforts for the physical self, and duty emphasizes debts which a person owes to all conscious beings.

As mentioned above, the emphasis on right is limited to the comforts of the physical self. In the practice of social casework, time and again, one sees that the needs of the clients are not limited to their material wants only. If that were the case, perhaps, this emphasis on rights would have served the purpose. But it has been

observed in the casework practice that material benefits alone can not ensure human happiness. It can only create conditions for man's happiness; but it can not ensure that man shall be happy or the person's wishes will be really fulfilled. It is observed that happiness is ensured when the material comforts are accompanied by fulfillment of emotional needs. But rights can not ensure the emotional needs of a client. The emotional needs can be met only if one focuses on the concept of duty. For instance, in the case of a cancer patient, one can provide him/her all rights to good medical facility but one can not ensure him/her the affection of his/her family as a matter of right. Similar is the case of the elderly persons. One can ensure them good and safe shelter, adequate medical aid and some economic assistance, as a matter of right. Can one say that an elderly has a right to have his/her children's affection? Can affection, love, care, acceptance be solicited as a matter of right? Focus on the concept of duty becomes imperative when as caseworkers one tries to bring about, an understanding between a mentally ill person and his/her family. It is expected and encouraged that the family regards it as its duty to look after the welfare of its sick member and that it takes genuine interest in what the member does or feels. But if extreme individualism is encouraged (as in the west) on the part of the members of the family then the need of the patient will not be looked into by them. At the same time the social caseworker, who has to respect the individualism of the members of the family, will have to go beyond the limits of casework practice in order to discuss with them their areas of duty towards their relatives. The caseworker in that case will be interfering with their self determination. In a culture where individualism is the cherished value the caseworker will have difficulty, too, in emphasizing that the individual should resort to self-denial to some extent and take care of others too. So an important issue arises here. One realizes that a human being has his/her emotional needs which are as important as physical needs. As a matter of right the patient in the West is entitled to sound medical care. But as a matter of right the patient cannot have relatives motivated to look after him/her when he/she feels lonely in the hospital. On the contrary, in India the emotional needs of the patient are taken care of by the family, friends and relatives as a matter of duty towards the patient. In the Indian context, it becomes a little easier for the caseworker to mobilize family support because culturally Indians are socialized to perform their duties towards their near and dears in the hour of need.

Hence, the casework practice would be seen in a comprehensive manner when it is able to assist clients to acquire material comforts and satisfy his emotional needs which may or may not have much to do with such comforts. To illustrate, the goal of casework is fulfilled and the concept of duty becomes crucial when a caseworker mobilizes the family support for the care of a disabled person. Society always encourages individuals, families, communities to take genuine interest in the life of people who are old, sick, infirm, disadvantaged and vulnerable. But if extreme individualism is encouraged then the sense of responsibility towards oneself and others will disappear. It has been observed that extreme individualization has ruined the family as a social unit in the West. The desire of personal fulfillment without a sense of duty towards others can lead to social destruction.

Hence, in Indian culture where family is considered as a basic social unit and is ready to support the individual in every kind of situation, it becomes vital that casework is geared towards the concept of duty. This does not mean that authoritarianism should prevail and people who regard themselves as powerless

or insignificant should resort to abject surrender to a human being or to a group or to a power transcending man. What is expected is a strong search for a person and his/her strength. A person must develop his/her power of reason to understand himself/herself, his/her relationship to his/her fellowmen and his/her position in the larger society.

In this competitive society where survival of the fittest applies very aptly, there are situations when a person fails to control his/her selfishness and does not think about the welfare of others. His/her sense of duty remains restricted to the personal gains only. In such a society the caseworker has a very important role to play.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

1) How is case work perceived by practitioners in India?

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2) In Indian culture, how does one justify the concept of duty in the casework practice?

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1.6 INDIGENIZATION OF CASEWORK PRACTICE

In Indian culture, social caseworker often has to work towards enabling the client and the members of his/her family to understand their intrinsic dignity as human beings and act accordingly.

It needs to be highlighted that often in India, there is a general tendency towards conformity to the group norm, on the part of the people. Hence in traditional casework situations the individual's adjustment to his/her reality is disturbed to some extent. However, the caseworker can help the individuals to adjust with their new reality and make an effort to integrate new ideas and new values in their daily living. Their conformity to the group norm should be with the proper understanding of their role as a human being and relationship to the group and duty towards the group. Caseworker has to enable the individuals to discharge their duties and help the family members or society to grapple with new ideas and thinking that will ultimately benefit them.

The social worker in order to be of help to his/her client in discharging the duties involving unselfishness and self denial must himself/herself be a person with a

high sense of duty towards the client, profession and fellowmen. Though it is true that a client can identify with ethical principles and thereby practice them in his/her day-to-day life, yet identification with the concrete is more meaningful than identification with the abstract.

In India, when a client is addressed as *brother*, *sister* or *mother* –very subtly both conveyed to each other that both the client and the caseworker recognize each other as fellow beings. This reflects more of an attempt made by the caseworker to identify with the client. Mere terms used to address the people would not lead to the emotional closeness with the client. In fact it leads to the acceptance of the caseworker by the client thereby enhances his efficiency in building relationship with his client.

In the practice of casework in India, however, the importance of active approach can not be denied. It may be a result of our Indian culture and tradition. Traditionally, Indians have learnt to value the words of the elders, or are used to being told by our seniors, what is right and what is wrong. So rather than asking in an indirect way what is the best course of action, the client needs to be actively facilitated in the decision making process. The active method can be growth producing too, provided an approach is made with the right spirit and atmosphere. A considerable section of population is not used to democracy and self-reliance; hence it confuses them when a democratic approach is followed in the problem solving process.

Particularly in India, an active approach plays an important role and the worker has to visit the client at his/her residence whenever possible. To illustrate, the women clients are not used to visiting agency offices all by themselves, they feel hesitant or afraid to go there. In such situations, the caseworker has to take an active approach and make a home visit to remove these barriers in order to avail her of the help.

A social caseworker in India is very much aware of the difficulties of conducting an intervention with the client where family considers its right to take decisions for their family members. The client may not even find privacy to talk to the caseworker in front of its family members. An active approach, if planned out properly and geared to suitable situations, will lead to required change in the client. An active approach does not mean autocratic approach. During casework interviews, the worker provides encouragement and facilitates to the client to reveal his/her repressed feelings, to clarify his/her thinking and to give his/her opinion on the alternatives suggested by the caseworker.

In the practice of the social casework, there is great need for a flexible approach on the part of the worker. While working with a person who has come with a problem, it is important to see which casework approach is most suitable with this particular client. This will help to enhance maximum adjustment of the client with his/her environment. The rigidity to stick to a particular approach would lead only to the defeat of the purpose of casework.

An Indian caseworker in the course of his/her service to human beings often has to work towards enabling the client and the members of his/her family to understand their intrinsic dignity as human beings and act accordingly. There is also a need to work with them to enable them to see that it is against their dignity as human beings to be exploited by others. In being exploited they are failing to live up to

the human dignity. The caseworker has to work both with the exploiter and the victims of exploitation to put them on the path of restoration of their *inner dignity* – a concept emphasized by *Bhagwad Gita*. To work towards this, the caseworker works on various dimensions of the person. In India particularly religion and philosophy often play a significant importance in the practice of case work. Hence, in Indian casework practice the place of religion and philosophy should not be minimized. Another interesting feature of the Indian culture is the deep-rooted belief in *karma*. All the actions of a person are *karma*. Technically, the word also means the effects of actions. It is in this sense that people generally feel that whatever good or bad things that happen to them are the result of *karma*. Social caseworkers point on that if good things should happen, then the person should perform such actions which bring about a positive change. This would result in a better life for the client.

In India, the caseworker has to perform a two-fold role: On one hand s/he has to handle traditional casework situations, where the individual's adjustment to his/her reality is disturbed due to internal or external strains. On the other, caseworker's role is to help an individual to reach a new level of integration by introducing new ideas and new ways of living. Caseworker should not be confined to help the client to adjust to the existing reality but also to become an active partner in the process of change for the betterment of society as well.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) In the practice of casework in India, the importance of active approach can not be denied. Justify.

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- 2) How does a case worker use the concepts of Bhagwad Gita in case work intervention?

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1.7 LET US SUM UP

A person is to be understood as a member of the society who shares the life experiences with other persons. One can reasonably guess the outer and inner forces which influence the spectrum of human and social relationships, but one can not possibly standardize a person and control the social situation in which he/

she lives. It modified the political structure, economic organisation, social institutions and cultural traditions and add to the complexities of human and social problems. In family relations, whether marital, parental and domestic or social the economic, psychological and moral factors influenced the total situation in varying degrees. All social work interventions are socially and culturally determined social casework practice, the goal of which is to enable the individual to lead a personally satisfying life, is not very much possible in the same manner (as in the west) in the Indian society. In India where group is given primary importance over the individuals, the client will not have the right to individualism.

In the Indian context, the concept of self fulfillment and self expression go hand in hand with the concept of conformity to the group norm. In Indian society the individual remains, more or less, a participating member bound to his/her original group. Indian tradition does not primarily seem to subscribe to the concept of right. In the practice of social casework, time and again, one sees that the needs of the clients are not limited to their material wants only. The emotional needs can be met only if one focuses on the concept of duty. Society always encourages individuals, families, and communities to take genuine interest in the life of people who are old, sick, infirm, disadvantaged and vulnerable. In the Indian culture, social caseworker often has to work towards enabling the client and the members of his/her family to understand their intrinsic dignity as human beings and act accordingly.

Caseworker has to enable the individual to discharge his/her duties and help his/her family members or society to grapple with new ideas and thinking that will ultimately benefit them.

An active approach, if planned out properly and geared to suitable situations, will lead to required growth in the client. To work towards this, the caseworker works on the various dimensions of the human being especially self awareness

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UNIT 2 BEHAVIOURAL CONCEPTS FOR UNDERSTANDING THE CLIENTS

Contents

**Archana Dassi*

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Human Needs
- 2.3 Structure of Personality
- 2.4 Factors Influencing Personality
- 2.5 Defense Mechanisms
- 2.6 Concept of Social Role
- 2.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.8 Further Readings and References

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this unit is to provide you the basic knowledge of behavioural concepts for understanding the client. After reading this unit you should be able to:

- have knowledge of common human needs;
- understand the structure of the personality and factors influencing personality development;
- have an understanding of several defense mechanisms which include denial, rationalization, displacement, identification, compensation, fanaticism and Projection; and
- know the concept of social role.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In every helping and caring profession, the professional makes an attempt to understand the client and develop a conceptual sketch of the clients' personality. This understanding is a prerequisite for effective helping. To develop this understanding, an extensive body of theoretical knowledge is available to the caseworker in the form of behavioural sciences which deal with fundamental characteristics of human behaviour.

Grace Mathew (2011) has formulated five prepositions that constitute a convenient framework for understanding human behaviour. They are as follows:

- 1) An individual's behaviour is conditioned by his / her environment and his / her life experiences.
- 2) For human growth and development it is essential that certain basic needs be met.

- 3) Emotional needs are real and they cannot be met or removed through intellectual reasoning.
- 4) Behaviour is purposeful and is in response to the individual's physical and emotional needs.
- 5) Other people's behaviour can be understood only in terms of one's own emotional and intellectual comprehension.

The knowledge used in understanding the client is mainly derived from the discipline of sociology and psychology.

2.2 HUMAN NEEDS

For understanding human growth and development, it is essential to have knowledge of the common human needs. The caseworker attempts to understand the client's needs and responds to the person in an individualized way according to his/her needs. According to Maslow, an individual's needs can be categorized as follows:

- Physiological needs: This refers to basic needs of food, water and sex.
- Safety needs: This refers to safety from disease, pain, physical damage and natural or manmade hazards.
- Belongingness needs: Need to belong to a group. A need to love and be loved.
- Esteem needs: Need to be recognized, accepted, appreciated and identified by the significant other.
- Self-actualization needs: A need to work for self-fulfillment and self growth.

The environment is a factor that needs to be considered with reference to fulfillment of needs. An individual's environment is his / her surroundings which include the physical set up, the living and non-living things, conditions and circumstances that affect his / her life one way or the other. The needs are met by the resources that are present in the environment. The adaptive behaviour of the human beings depends to a great extent on learning. The human behaviour is determined by the learning and the maturation process. The learning process is facilitated by the people who are in authority (parents, teachers, etc.) as well as who are equal in authority (peers group etc.). The process called *socialization* refers to the early learning period in which children become aware of the society and their relationship with others through the influence of various socializing agents.

As far as child is concerned, the family plays a very important role in fulfilling the needs of the child – both physical and psychosocial. The child's behaviour is formed by the way s/he has been groomed during her / his socialization process. Hence to understand the behaviour of a client one needs to understand his/her socialization patterns. All this leads to development of the personality.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) What are the prepositions for understanding the human behaviour?

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2) What are the common human needs?

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2.3 STRUCTURE OF PERSONALITY

Personality is the overall picture of the characteristic behaviour of the individual.

Behaviour includes thinking, feeling, speaking and doing. The concept of personality growth is complex and requires special knowledge and skills to identify different aspects of the personality.

Human life is seen as a successive mastery of stimuli which are of two kinds, internal and constant (inherited instinctual forces) and external and continuous (the pressure of 'environment' outside the man). Sigmund Freud's theory on personality structure highlights the structure and development of the personality which consists of three systems — id, ego and superego. The structure-less collection of internal stimuli is called id. This represents the unconscious part of the personality which works not according to reason and logic, but to the primary processes which recognise no law of contradiction and no principle of reality. The id is the most primitive part of the personality and is governed by the pleasure principle. An important and persisting activity of the unconscious is described as fantasy, a kind of primitive thought using sets of feelings rather than concepts. Mediating between the unconscious stimuli, on the one hand, and the fierce forbidding superego, on the other, is the ego, that aspect of personality directly responsible for maintaining the equilibrium of the whole personality. Its operations are conducted largely in terms of series of defense tactics (the mechanism of defense). The equilibrium of the personality is subject to a series of threats as libido (or sexual instinct) develops through a number of clearly marked stages changing its aim and object. These are usually described as the oral, anal and phallic stages. The last clearly places the personality in the field of relationships with persons other than his mother and it is resolution of the ensuing crisis (the oedipal situation) which, according to Freud, originates the superego or internalized forbidding parent. The ways in which the person 'navigates' these stages has an important bearing on his future character.

Ego has various roles to perform: impulse control, tolerance of frustration, postponement of gratification, tension management, reality testing, object relation and integration. The function of synthesis performed by the ego is a complex phenomenon involving the integration of different experiences of living, positive and negative, happy and unhappy events, threats and fears, joys and sorrows. Ego makes it possible for the personality to assimilate the different experiences. To illustrate, a boy who nearly died in a drowning accident transcends the event and the fear of water, by learning swimming and becoming a skilled swimmer. The

positive developments after the bad experience indicate the successful functioning of ego with regard to integration and synthesis. A negative development could be horrible fear of water that one is not able to overcome easily. In such a case, the ego is deficient in the matter of synthesizing a negative experience. The fear producing incident has not been assimilated: it has remained as an isolated offending fragment in his / her personality. Ego gears our personality to adapt to the social environment which ultimately helps in the growth of the individual.

2.4 FACTORS INFLUENCING PERSONALITY

A well balanced personality means fulfillment of needs and adaptation to the environment. But, over the course of time one finds a large number of obstacles to adequate personality development.

- *Faulty parenting* – Inability of parents to fulfill the needs of their children due to lack of material resources, ignorance or lack of parenting skills lead to impaired personality development. Parents sometimes indulge into severe child rearing practices that result into a strenuous relationship between parent and child, resulting into personality malfunctioning.
- *Socialization* – Most of the ego functions of growth develop through the process of socialization. Those parents, teachers and elders (primary socializing agents) who have some understanding about children's needs are able to rear children in such a way that fosters the operation of ego functions. There are things that child should have, and many things that child does not need, and possession of which may have adverse effects. The socialization has to operate within the agenda of legitimate freedom and restraints.
- *Over protection* – Overprotection hampers the development of ego apparatus. When the children have a smooth and comfortable life without their having to flex their own physical, intellectual and emotional muscles, there is very little scope for the operation of ego functions like impulse control, tolerance of frustration, postponement of gratification, reality orientation and the like.
- *Strong superego* – it means a person is guided by certain principles and standards of behaviour. If the parents themselves have a very strong superego, then it is easier for children to imitate them and form a strong superego in them. But families which try to inculcate values in the children by punishment and intimidation, it is likely that the children may accept parental teaching in a superficial way or reject them, or develop a superego which is rigid and punitive.
- *Superego-ego balance* – In a healthy ego-superego relationship, the guilt feelings generated by the superego are handled effectively by the ego, so that other functions of ego are not affected by the guilt feelings. When the superego is rigid and punitive, the superego-ego duo becomes ill-matched, creating situations in which guilt feeling overwhelm the ego, thus affecting the personality as a whole. For example, there are individuals who commit suicide because they are not able to cope with their own guilt feelings.

It can be summed up as certain attitudes and practices on the part of the parents which facilitate as well as obstruct the normal process of personality development in children.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

1) What are the three structures of personality given by Freud?

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2) What are the factors influencing personality development?

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2.5 DEFENSE MECHANISMS

Life requires continuous adjustment to changes in the physical and social environment. Socialization helps us in social adjustment. But adjustments are not easy to achieve, they are complex, complicated and depend on a number of elements. Similar situations demanding adjustments are dealt by different persons in different manners. Social adjustments help to fulfill the needs in accordance with social demands.

When a goal is blocked or a need remains unmet, it results in underlying tension – it shows up in the form of frustration. The consequences of frustration are many and varied. It may breed hostility, anger, destructive behaviour, delinquent behaviour, silence, restraint and withdrawal. Thus frustration results in intense emotion. But it may also lead people to discover new ways of satisfying their needs, to revise their knowledge and thinking, and to struggle more fiercely against circumstances which cause frustration. Goals could be blocked because of various reasons: physical obstacles from the environment, obstacles from the social environment and internal psychological difficulties.

Human beings use various behaviours to be able to cope with anxiety. These are simple coping strategies used in everyday life at the conscious level, distinct from defense mechanisms which are used mostly at the unconscious level. Some commonly seen behaviours which can also occur in response to anxiety are as follows:

- 1) Swearing, cursing, using abusive language, crying, laughing etc
- 2) Excessive eating, drinking and smoking.
- 3) Indulging in any vigorous physical activity.
- 4) Sleeping

- 5) Talking to others
- 6) Thinking through the anxiety causing situation, planning action and taking action.

But often the individual is weighed down by the feelings of anxiety caused by frustration. Anxiety is painful emotion which produces irritability, depression and fatigue. To get rid of it some people withdraw from the frustrating situation instead of fighting it out with renewed effort and insight. This is a substitute reaction which furnishes a means of release from tensions and anxiety. They avoid goal directed behaviour, but seek to cope with anxiety in an indirect way. They do not get rid of the situation-causing-anxiety but only try to reduce the anxiety that is caused. They make one feel that the person does not need to make changes in his/her own environment and that one can protect his/her self-esteem by taking shelter in them. Since these modes of reactions help one to protect or defend his/her ego, they are called defense mechanisms.

These defense mechanisms involve distortions in perception and reasoning. By denying or misinterpreting some aspects of reality the individual adopts modes of behaviour or belief with which he/she often unconsciously seeks to defend his/her self from blame or feeling of guilt. Defense mechanisms are more complex than the coping devices, though they are both aimed at adaptation. Denial, rationalization, displacement, identification, compensation, fantasy and projection are some of the defense mechanisms.

- Denial is the shutting off reality, in contexts which cause excessive anxiety. For example, a parent refusing to accept that his/her child is mentally challenged. It is possible that the ideas which the parents have regarding the problem of mental impairment are such that they cause undue anxiety for the ego, leading to the use of denial as a defense way.
- Rationalisation refers to substituting *good reasons* for real reasons so that their actions may appear justified, logical and socially laudable. It seeks to make irrational look rational by providing good reasons for real reasons. For example, a man makes money through unfair means and spends a part of it on charitable purposes. If he says that he is using bad means to make money only to help the poor, he is rationalising his behaviour.
- Displacement: When the direct expression of an aroused emotion is inhibited, the emotion may be indirectly discharged by transferring it to the neutral object or idea. This transfer of affect from its original to an unrelated object is called displacement. For example, annoyance of a person towards the boss is displaced upon and taken out on family.
- Sublimation refers to a behaviour when displacement leads to a socially valued practice or activity. For example, a young woman who, failing to satisfy her needs of a family and children and children of her own sublimates the desires by taking to nursery teaching or nursing. The substitute activities are of a higher order than the blocked activity.
- Identification involves unconscious placing of oneself in the situation of another person and assuming the characteristic of that person. It is the practice of feeling that you are in the role of someone. Identification is common in several areas of social living. Hero worship helps to boost ones own prestige and conceal ones faults.

- Regression refers to reverting to less mature behaviours that are characteristic of earlier stages of development. For example, a six year old boy who could speak clearly started blabbering like a two year old baby, after the death of his favourite grandmother.
- Compensation is an ego device against the pressure of excessive guilt feelings. To make up for some feelings of inadequacy, many individuals engage in various forms of compensatory activity. Compensation may be direct or indirect, desirable or undesirable. Direct compensation consists in intensive striving for success in the very field of inferiority. When the individual attempts to counteract the feelings of inferiority in one field by success in some other endeavour, he/she is engaging in indirect compensation.
- Fantasy also known as day-dreaming is resorted to by the mind as an escape device to run away from anxiety-ridden contexts. By a simple flight into the fantasy, one escapes the hardships and unpleasant aspects of the real life.
- Projection refers to attributing to and observing in others one's own impulses and traits. Attributing to others one's own unconscious motives, desires, defects or attitudes, and thus using others as a screen on which are thrown out one's own mental states and processes. This externalization of the personal defects serves to protect the ego against self criticism. By criticizing other's faults which one possesses, one tries to evade the painful recognition of the personal failings.

2.6 CONCEPT OF SOCIAL ROLE

The social role of a person is the pattern or mode of behaving, related to the position in the social group to which s/he belongs. There are thus roles of father, mother, son, daughter, etc in the family. In the school, there are students, teachers, principals, etc. A role is always in relation to another person or persons, and the relationship creates the role partners. Every role implies certain functions and privileges, in other words a role carrier has certain duties and rights. Regarding the function of role carrier, there are expectations from others shaped by cultural traditions and customs. The role of the person is visible through the tasks that s/he performs. For example, a woman is expected to perform child caring, along with home management

Social roles can be analyzed mainly along three aspects: (1) the actions, (2) the prescriptions and expectations that govern the actions and relationships and (3) the evaluation or assessment, which is mainly of the performance task. Most of the problems of social functioning are with reference to role performance.

Reasons for poor role performance

An individual's performance of one or more of the major roles may be defective, inadequate or impaired by various factors listed below:

- 1) Non-fulfillment of needs
- 2) Divergent role expectations
- 3) Physical and mental illness
- 4) Lack of material and non-material resources

- 5) Mental and physical disabilities
- 6) Lack of preparation for role performance
- 7) The occurrence of conflict between two roles.

The above seven factors are not necessarily exclusive of each other. The concept of socialization is very relevant for understanding human behaviour with reference to casework. Many more sociological constructs like culture, social institutions, social control etc. are also equally relevant to the social work practice to bring about effective changes in the human behaviour.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) What are the commonly seen behaviours which occur in response to anxiety?

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- 2) What are the reasons for poor role performance?

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2.7 LET US SUM UP

An individual's behaviour is conditioned by his / her environment and his / her life experiences. Behaviour is purposeful and is in response to the individual's physical and emotional needs.

For understanding human growth and development, it is essential to have knowledge about the common human needs. According to Maslow, an individual's need can be categorized as follows: physiological needs, belongingness needs, need to belong to a group and, self-actualization needs. The human behaviour is determined by the learning and the maturation process. As far as a child is concerned, the family plays a very important role in fulfilling the needs of the child – both physical and psychosocial. The child's behaviour is formed by the way s/he has been groomed during her / his socialization process. Hence to understand the behaviour of a client one needs to understand his/her socialization patterns. All this leads to development of the personality. Personality is the overall picture of the characteristic behaviour of the individual. The concept of personality growth is complex and requires special knowledge and skills to identify different aspects of the personality.

Sigmund Freud's theory on personality structure highlights the structure and development of the personality which consists of three systems — id, ego and superego. Ego has various roles to perform: impulse control, tolerance of

frustration, postponement of gratification, tension management, reality testing, object relation and integration. Ego makes it possible for the personality to assimilate the different experiences. Ego gears our personality to adapt to the social environment which ultimately helps in growth of an individual.

A well balanced personality means fulfillment of needs and adaptation to the environment. *Faulty parenting* – Inability of parents to fulfill the needs of their children due to lack of material resources, ignorance or lack of parenting skills leading to impaired personality development. *Socialization* – Most of the ego functions of growth develop through the process of socialization. Those parents, teachers and elders (primary socializing agents) who have some understanding about children's needs are able to rear children in such a way that fosters the operation of ego functions. *Over protection* – Overprotection hampers the development of ego apparatus. *Superego-ego balance* – In a healthy ego-superego relationship, the guilt feelings generated by the superego are handled effectively by the ego. Life means continuous adjustment to changes in the physical and social environment. Socialization helps us in social adjustment. Social adjustments help to fulfill the needs in accordance with social demands.

It may breed hostility, anger, destructive behaviour, delinquent behaviour, silence, restraint and withdrawal. Thus frustration breeds intense emotional status. Human beings use various behaviours to be able to cope with the anxiety. Denial, rationalization, displacement, identification, compensation, fantasy and projection are some of the defense mechanisms.

Most of the problems of social functioning are with reference to role performance.

Reasons for poor role performance are non-fulfillment of needs, divergent role expectations, physical and mental illness, mental and physical disabilities and lack of preparation for role performance.

The concept of socialization is very relevant for understanding human behaviour with reference to casework. Many more sociological constructs like culture, social institutions, social control etc are also equally relevant to the social work practice to bring about effective changes in the human behaviour.

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UNIT 3 SCOPE OF SOCIAL CASE WORK: NATURE OF PROBLEMS TO BE ADDRESSED

Contents

**Archana Dassi*

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Failure in Coping
- 3.3 Fields of Case Work Practice
- 3.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.5 Further Readings and References

3.0 OBJECTIVES

Social casework is one of the methods of social work which is being practiced by social workers across the globe. It is one of the primary methods that enhance the social functioning of the individual, based on one to one relationship. After reading this unit, you should be able to know:

- the usual coping patterns that are ineffective in the face of some problems; and
- the fields of social casework practice.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

All the human beings face difficulties in their day-today living, as majority of them are handled effectively with the help of various resources in hand. These are the difficulties of living which fall within ones' coping abilities and strategies. When difficulties assume dimensions that strain the coping capacity and go beyond their competence in handling, they become problems. These problems are those situations which are beyond the reach of the person to be solved on his/her own and s/he needs an outside help. People who seek casework services are called the clients who encounter problems.

Social casework situation comes into existence when a person comes to a professional seeking help in connection with some problem which s/he is not able to deal with himself / herself. The professional social caseworker, views these concerns in the light of the person's total environment.

According to Grace Mathew (2011) problems of casework may be caused by unmet physical or psychosocial needs or by the inability to perform one's social roles owing to various reasons. Physical needs refer to the basic survival needs of food, water, shelter and clothing whereas psychosocial needs refer to love, recognition, security, opportunities for intellectual and emotional growth. These problems which result because of the unmet needs cause social dysfunctioning of individuals.

**Prof. Archana Dassi, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi*

Problems of social functioning cause distress to the individuals who come voluntarily or involuntarily to a social work agency for help. These individuals who come to seek help are not considered as one of the masses but they are given special attention as worthy human beings who have come with their unique problem. Case Work method places high value on the individuals who come to seek help. Those people who seek help from caseworkers are those whose usual coping mechanisms have been ineffective in the face of some problems.

3.2 FAILURE IN COPING

There are **reasons why individuals find their usual coping patterns ineffective** in the face of some problem. These reasons may be divided into five categories:

- 1) **Lack of material resources:** It is easily conceivable how problems of living originate from poverty, destitution, unemployment, housing problems and related factors. Lack of monetary resources makes it difficult for an individual to deal with situations effectively. For instance, a patient who is well disposed to the treatment procedure may, however, be unable to comply with the physician's instructions because s/he does not have sufficient money to purchase medicines, appliances or special/dietary food prescribed for him / her. A child who indulges into the habit of stealing because of poverty is an apt example of lack of resources leading to apparent problems.
- 2) **Misconceptions about situations and relationships and lack of appropriate information:** Wrong notions about things prevent people from handling difficult situations effectively. Many people have superstitious beliefs about diseases which prevent them from taking prompt medical treatment which can cure the disease. For example, epileptic fits is caused by devils is a myth but if that is the belief held by the client it is going to worsen his /her condition. Sometimes it is ignorance of existing services and resources which delays the action. A widow is not aware of existing social security measures provided by the state.
- 3) **Illness or health related handicaps:** Physical and mental illness and health related handicaps of various types make people helpless or irrational in the face of difficulties. For example, when the bread earner of the family is ill, all the other members of the family have to face a variety of problems and make more subtle plan.
- 4) **Emotional distress resulting from stressful situations:** In certain situations strong feelings are aroused which make a person incapable of acting sensibly. For example, when a father knows that his son has been involved in antisocial activities, he may feel so upset and ashamed that he may want to throw the boy out of the house and to sever all connections with him. In such situations the emotionally upset person needs someone to whom he can verbalize his feelings freely. This helps him to reduce anxiety and set the mind clear for objective thinking.
- 5) **Personality features or deficiencies:** Defective features of one's personality not only create problematic situations for one but also make one incapable of solving problems of life. For example, if a little girl is brought up by her mother in the strong belief that her father who deserted the family was a bad

person and that all men are similarly bad, it is probable that the girl might have a difficult relationship with her husband when she later marries. The generalized wrong idea may get deeply implanted in the daughter's personality during childhood and she may not be even aware of it as she grows into an adult. There are numerous problems of this type affecting the human relationships caused by unhealthy attitudes and reactions which are deeply embedded in the personality.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) Why do individuals find their usual coping patterns ineffective in the face of some problems?

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Scope of social casework practice can be determined on the basis of the following components:

- 1) Person-in-context – the context here includes the total social environment of the client – a male adult with visual impairment, a middle-aged women abandoned by her family, an orphaned child in an orphanage.
- 2) The concern or the problem requiring help – Destitution, chronic illness, drug dependence, trauma caused by riots or serious accident, bereavement, role conflict and displacement.
- 3) The human service organisations that provide the location for providing help, like schools, hospitals, childcare institutions, short stay homes, institutions for the elderly and juvenile homes.

3.3 FIELDS OF CASE WORK PRACTICE

Fields of casework practice are the settings in which the client usually gets help for his/her concerns. Case Work is practiced in a variety of agencies or human service organizations. Various human service agencies which offer case work services to help people in distress include social service departments of hospitals and clinics, family counselling centres, residential institutions for children and adults, social service departments in schools, child guidance clinics, correctional institutions and mental health settings.

- **Case work practiced in primary settings like a family welfare agency**, has the primary function to help people with social problems. In secondary settings like hospitals, schools, courts, etc. the casework function is to facilitate people to make optimum use of the services and promotion of human welfare. Though casework is a generic method, when it is combined with activities of other field or profession (other than social work), differences arise from the special contribution of that field be it medicine, psychiatry or criminology. The practice

of casework is conditioned by the primary or major functions of a secondary setting for casework. For instance, one of the principles of the casework is that client should be helped to verbalize his difficulties.

In a medical setting, which is a secondary setting for casework, this principle has to be modified in certain cases e.g. the patient's condition may not be such that medically it would be advisable to make the client talk. Under such circumstances the caseworker has to modify his / her approach and find out how best he/she could be of service without coming into clash with the practice of another profession. A caseworker has also to see how the practice of casework in collaboration with other professions can make both the professions more effective so far as human welfare is concerned.

- **In India, casework is practiced in some places in connection with medicine,** e.g., medical social work in hospitals and clinics run by government and other private bodies. Doctors are the main professional groups, responsible for the medical care of the patients. The recognition of the psychosocial and cultural dimensions of the illness and hospitalization has enabled employment of trained social workers in the hospitals.

Social casework is utilized in the Out Patient Department, the Wards and the Special clinics. The heavy work load of doctors in large government hospitals generally leads to lack of clear communication between the medical staff and the patients and their families. In such a situation, the main role expected of social workers are those of mediator, enabler, coordinator of services, case manager, mobilizer of the resources in terms of material and manpower and a member of the team of professionals. The major task of the social caseworker is to work with the patient and his family.

- **Case Work is practiced in the institutions providing mental health services** for e.g. child guidance clinics, mental hospitals, psychiatric clinics, psychiatry departments in general hospitals and crisis intervention centers as a part of psychiatric casework. In this setting, psychiatrists and psychologists are the main professional group in charge of care and treatment of the mentally ill or emotionally disturbed persons. The patients may be attending OPDs, day care or may be hospitalized. The main task of the caseworker are to maintain constant contact with the family of the patient, mediate between the doctors and the patient and his family, provide counselling to the patient, assist in discharge and aftercare of the patient in order to rehabilitate him / her back into the society to which he/she belongs. The worker also provides necessary support to the family and helps the family members to understand the needs of the mentally ill person.
- **Social case work with chronically and terminally ill patients:** the patients who are suffering from chronic illnesses like diabetes, asthma and heart disease need help in understanding their illness and the demands of the treatment, and adjusting their lifestyles to the limitations imposed by the condition. The families of the patients also need support and guidance in dealing with the patient's condition that may have long term implications for the entire family. In some cases, especially among those belonging to lower income groups, the financial burden may need to be eased out by identifying and mobilizing resources in the kinship network or the community at large.

While working with the terminally ill patients, the first dilemma the worker faces is to inform the patient and his family about his / her illness. The patients suffering from a terminal illness like cancer, HIV / AIDS have additional stress factor. The stress is caused by the thought of death and the anxiety about the family after the death of the patient. The tasks of the caseworker include:

- Ensuring palliative care to reduce the pain and discomfort.
 - Talking about death and releasing the stress.
 - Preparing and involving the patient in his future planning about the family after death and various unmet tasks.
 - Providing opportunity and support to the family to accept the illness and talk about the consequences in the long run.
 - Providing emotional and material support to the family.
 - In case of HIV / AIDS the caseworker needs to handle the issues related to stigma and discrimination faced by the patient and the family at various levels.
- **In family casework**, efforts are concentrated upon family as a social unit and the individuals as members thereof. The problems centre on family relationships or adjustment and / or any aspect of a family life. Family casework can be said to be the basic to all casework. For instance, in the practice of casework in any setting like medical casework or psychiatric casework, family casework is included. However in family service agencies where casework should be practiced today an effort to limit the scope of work to certain family problems such as child placement, marriage counseling, problems of unmarried mothers is apparent, instead of dealing with all problems relating to the family indebtedness, involving financial relief, parent-child relationship and marital disharmony.
 - **Case work in residential institutions**
 - ❖ **Case Work has also found a place in the field of correctional setting** so as to practice in connection with juvenile welfare board, adult courts, probation, parole and aftercare work. Case Work treatment in institutional settings relies as heavily upon efforts toward role-adaptation in the client as upon role-adjustment in the primary groups, of which both the client and the persons who referred him are his members. In the correctional field, the probation officer interprets the delinquent's behaviour to the judge and to the police officers. The delinquent mode of adaptation to the combination of internal and external forces that directed him into the role of delinquent requires the same kind of study and assessment as pursued with casework's other clients. While working with the institutionalized delinquents and adults in conflict with law, the caseworker has ready access to those who define the social role of inmate and who observe the client's daily role-performance. In such institutional settings, the caseworker is part of the world to which he is trying to help the client adapt more satisfactorily.

- ❖ **Case Work in children's homes:** Children who are destitute, orphans runaways, vulnerable to violence, abuse or moral danger are generally placed in children's homes. Most of these Homes operate under the provisions of Juvenile Justice Act and therefore provide custodial care to children for specific time period. Social case worker is expected to help each inmate adjust to the life within the home and achieve psychosocial development. As the children have often gone through traumatic experiences before they are placed in homes, it is very important for them to come to terms with their life, talk about it and get over the pain and the sense of betrayal. The worker is expected to provide pastoral care, liaison with schools where children go for education help, children develop positive relationships within the institution and prepare for life after their stay in the home is over.
- ❖ **Case Work in Homes for the aged:** The stresses of modernization and breakdown of joint family structures has led to adult children sending their aged parents to residential institutions. The residents in these homes need nursing care, understanding and emotional support. The caseworkers in these institutions help the residents to cope up with loss of the loved ones, illness, lack of energy, loneliness, loss of economic independence and the thought of approaching death. The caseworker enables the client maintain his /her self esteem, mobilize community resources like children and youth to spend time with the residents of the old age home, talk to them and attend to their simple errands.
- **Case Work practice is very popular in the school setting.** The school caseworker, working with the pupil in trouble in a school setting, goes through a similar course of study and assessments, usually knowing through a referral statement from a classroom teacher or principal what social expectations the child is failing to meet. Case Work in such situations may involve direct work not only with the child but also with his parents. The child's performance of roles in extra familial settings is related theoretically to current experience and probably the past experience in the central role relationships between parents and children. The goal of the school social work is to reinforce the child's potential strengths and capacities for satisfying, effective, and acceptable performance in the role of pupil. To achieve this goal in an institutional setting like the school, the caseworker directly works with the teacher and also with the other school personnel, in an effort to help them understand some of what underlies the child's behaviour, and to adjust their expectations of the pupil, so that a given child's capacities for role-adaptation to these standards may be understood and seen as falling within a somewhat broadened definition of acceptable behaviour for the pupil. Besides, working at remedial level, school also provides an opportunity to the caseworker to work at the preventive and promotive level. Transition of child from the entry point to passing out from the school coincides with the child's own maturation process. By anticipating the demands and the stresses of the particular age group, appropriate interventions can be planned so as to avoid unnecessary emotional turmoil. By helping in the development of personality and the life and social skills, the social caseworker can achieve the status of a partner in the educational process. The social caseworker works as a liaison between the family and the teacher. s/he acts as a mediator, enabler, teacher (giving necessary information), advocate (to highlight the negative impact of

school norms and practices on the child), change-agent for the school's systems and procedures, and as a consultant for the staff of the school in matters regarding children's needs and well-being.

- **Caseworker has an important role to play in Adoption services.** One of the important roles that child welfare agencies are supposed to play is foster care and adoption services. The caseworker has a good idea about the behaviour that child is going to manifest in foster home and hence the caseworker tries to match the attributes of the child with that of the family environment. Similar is the role of caseworker in the adoption services. The caseworker sees to it that role demands of a family do not exceed the child's capacities for role-adaptation. In the child welfare, the primary concern of the case worker is to keep the child in his home with his/her parents as far as possible. Otherwise the next possible thing that a caseworker tries is to provide an environment where the child's growth and development will occur in the desired direction.
- **Case Work in the organisations working with PWD:** The main tasks of the caseworker is to fulfill the objectives of the organisations such as:
 - ❖ Care;
 - ❖ Rehabilitation-vocational training, education (depending upon their capacity);
 - ❖ Offering services according to governmental provisions and special concessions;
 - ❖ Advocacy to reduce or remove social discrimination against differently abled;
 - ❖ Facilitating the client's acceptance and understanding of his / her situation and also recognition of his / her potential.

Giving support to the client (both emotional and action oriented) is an important intervention offered by the caseworker. The caseworker also works with the family to help them cope with the situation, to understand the needs of the client, and to learn the home management of the client.

- **Case Work in organisations working with women:** Social caseworkers are employed in family counselling centres, crime against women cells, legal aid cells, family courts and rape and crisis intervention centres. The role of the caseworker is to help the victim to come out of the trauma and deal with the self confidence and self esteem of the client. They also work with the family so as to mobilize their support for the client so that the client can deal in a better manner with his/her problem.
- **Case Work in organisations working with victims of disaster:** There is an increasing need for the individualized help for the victims of disasters – whether natural or manmade. Some of the common experiences of most of the victims of the disaster are trauma, loss of loved ones, loss of livelihood or assets, homelessness, feeling of helplessness, anguish, hostility, lack of community feeling, sense of fatality and unrealistic expectations from the worker. In this situation, the client needs individualized care to overcome debilitating impact of the crisis. The first step of the casework intervention is to bring them out of the trauma, then provide emotional support and build in

them hope for a secure future. Once the client has emerged out of the trauma, the caseworker engages the client in the planning and implementation of the action plan to facilitate the rehabilitation process.

- **In the field of Industry** there is a great need for introducing casework to deal with varied social problems of workers in industries. Individual problems of absenteeism, alcoholism, depression, stress related disorders, drug addiction etc among the factory workers are the concerns for the caseworkers.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) Mention the various health settings in which casework is practiced in India.

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- 2) Mention various residential institutional settings in which casework is practiced.

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3.4 LET US SUM UP

In the end, it may be stated that a human being, be s/he a patient, factory worker, a student, a probationer or a prisoner, if his problem is of social adjustment (either because his personality, adversely affects the environment and / or because his/her environment creates problems of adjustment for him/her deserves help through the casework method and novel skills to be of service to the suffering.

In order to help the casework clients, it is important to understand the factors underlying their problems. This method in turn, with its ever widening horizon, needs to be in search of numerous situations which limit their ability to solve the problems. It is generally seen that majority of casework clients seeking help belong to lower socio-economic levels. They bring problems which are generally caused as a result of multiple factors such as lack of material resources coupled with other predicaments. Hence, the role of social case worker is not only to provide intangible services but also take responsibility for providing material help. Therefore, the social caseworkers advocate on behalf of the client to get him / her necessary material help for the fulfillment of his / her basic needs. Caseworkers have developed strategies of intervention suited to the Indian clientele. A caseworker now has to see how the practice of case work in collaboration with other professions can make both the professions more effective so far as human welfare is concerned.

3.5 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 4 COMPONENTS OF CASE WORK

*Archana Dassi

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- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 The Person
- 4.3 The Problem
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4.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the different components of casework and relate to the role of a social worker in each component;
- Appreciation of the need to focus on the multi-person system of the client;
- Development of knowledge that a social worker must understand while providing service to a client in a particular agency;
- Understand the meaning and dimensions of problems;
- Understand the functions and purpose of an agency; and
- Gain insight on the process of dealing with the problem of a client.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Social casework is a complex, dynamic, and evolving phenomenon. It is complex by virtue of the varied knowledge which feed it, the ethical commitments which infuse it, the special auspices and conditions of its practice, the objectives and ends which guide it and the skills which empower it. It is a complicated process since it deals with understanding the interaction taking place between the client and his/her environment. As it is experienced, practiced, or thought about, the social casework is a living event. As such it cannot be contained within a definition. Yet we can try to define it in a manner as it is used by the practitioners.

Social casework is a process used by human welfare agencies to help individuals to cope more effectively with their problems in social functioning.

Casework is both social and psychological. The term “social” implies which involves more than one person; the term “psychological” is that which takes place within an individual. Since the individual does not live in a vacuum, the content of much of his inner experience is “psycho-social.” In other words, there is no real dichotomy between the social and the psychological. There is an aspect of

experience, however, which belongs to and is characterized by the individual himself.

The nucleus of the casework event is a person with a problem who comes to an organization where a professional representative helps him by a scientific process. Since this is the heart of almost any situation where a person seeks professional help, the distinctive characteristics must be delineated.

There are four components of casework known as the 4 P's:

- 1) The Person
- 2) The Problem
- 3) The Place
- 4) The Process

Let us examine each, one by one

4.2 THE PERSON

The person is any human being (it could be a man, woman or child or any) who finds himself/herself, or is found to be, in need of help in some aspect of his social-emotional living, whether the need be for tangible provisions or counsel. As he/she begins to receive help, he/she is called a "client". A client is one who seeks professional help, one who employs the help of another or one who is served by a social agency or an institution.

David Landy has identified the process a person goes through in seeking help or becoming a client:

- 1) The help seeker must decide something is wrong.
- 2) The help seeker must face the probability that family, friends and neighbours will know of his disability.
- 3) The help seeker must decide to admit to a helper he is in distress, failed or is not capable of handling his own problem.
- 4) The help seeker must decide to surrender enough sovereignty and autonomy to place himself in a dependency role.
- 5) The help seeker must decide to direct his search for help among persons and resources known to him.
- 6) The help seeker must decide to take time off a job or from other responsibilities to receive help.
- 7) The help seeker may realize that in receiving help relationship with others may be threatened.

The person seeking help brings to the helping situation concerns, needs and problems. The person comes with concerns, unmet needs and problems of social functioning. He/She comes from a societal and cultural milieu, a set of life experiences, and a set of transactions with other person's that make the person unique yet sharing the commonalities of humankind. The client of a social agency is like the other persons one has ever known, but he/she is different too. In broad ways he/she is like all other human beings; in a somewhat more limited way he/she is like all other human beings of his age or time or culture. But, as one moves

from understanding him/her simply as a human being to understanding him/her as this particular human being, one finds that, with all his/her's general likeness to others, he/she is as unique as his thumbprint. By nuance and fine line and by the particular way his/her bone and brain and spirit are joined, he/she is born and grows as a personality different in some ways from every other individual of his/her family, genus, or species.

The client role calls for active participation in the helping endeavor, which includes furnishing appropriate information to inform the decision making process, participation in the decision-making process to the limits of the clients ability and capacity, and the carrying put of the mutually agreed upon tasks.

Clients are of several types:

- 1) Those who ask for appropriate help for themselves.
- 2) Those who ask for help for another person or system.
- 3) Those who do not seek help but are in some way blocking or threatening the social functioning of another person (e.g., the neglectful parent in a child protection case).
- 4) Those who seek or use help as a means to reach their own goals or ends.
- 5) Those who seek help but for inappropriate goals.

Identification of clients type is the first step in the delivery of service, for the worker-client relationship and interaction will vary depending on the type of client and the nature of help sought.

Felix Biestik has identified seven needs of clients as they come to the helping situation:

- 1) To be dealt with as an individual rather than a type or category.
- 2) To express feelings both positive and negative.
- 3) To be accepted as a person of worth, a person with innate dignity.
- 4) Sympathetic understanding of and response to feelings expressed.
- 5) To be neither judged nor condemned for the difficulty in which the clients find themselves.
- 6) To make own choices and decisions concerning one's own life.
- 7) To help keep information confidential about self as secret as possible.

The client is a person with both needs and problem(s). The problem may be related to a client or his environment. No one can ever know the whole of another person, though may sometimes delude himself/herself to that effect. The reason for this lies not only in the subtle dimensions and interlacing of any personality but also in the shift and reorganization of new and old elements in the personality that take place continuously just because the person is alive in a live environment and is in interaction with it. Nevertheless, the person is a whole in any moment of his/her living. He/she operates as a physical, psychological, social entity, whether on the problem of his/her neurotic anxieties or of his inadequate income. He/she is a product-in-process, so to speak, of his/her constitutional makeup, his/her physical and social environment, his/her past environment, his/her experiences, his/her

present perceptions and reactions, and even his/her future aspirations. It is this physical-psychological-social-past-present-future configuration that he/she brings to every life-situation he/she encounters.

The person's behaviour has this purpose and meaning to gain satisfaction, to avoid and dissolve frustration and to maintain his/her balance- in- movement.

To understand a person, it is important to know his/her parts of personality that is Id (life forces of the individual), ego (conscious, drivers guiding our personality forces) and superego (unconscious, ethical values and principles) which have an important role in governing his/her behaviour.

Whether a person's behaviour is or is not effective in promoting his/her well-being depends in large part upon the functioning of his/her personality structure. The forces of the human personality combine in three major functions: (1) the life energies that seek satisfactory outlets; (2) the check system, automatic or voluntary, that halts, modifies, or re-channel these drives to make their ends acceptable to their owner and his/her environment; and (3) the organizing and governing operations that controls the negotiations and balances within the person himself/herself, as between what he/she wants and what he/she can and ought to do, and between himself and his/her physical environment. Freud, a psychologist defined them as id, ego and superego. The harmonious concerted action of these forces in one makes for personal and social balance and competence; their discord of faultiness is revealed in behaviour that is personally thwarting or socially unacceptable.

A person at any stage of his/her life is not only "a product" of nature but is also and always "in process" of being in the present and becoming in the future. What happens to the individual today may be as vital to him/her as what happened yesterday. Those physical, social and interpersonal situations he encounters in his/her operations today as worker, parent, spouse, student or client will have an impact upon him/her and will respond that can affect his/her development either morbidly or benignly.

The persons "being and becoming" behaviour is both shaped and judged by the expectations he/she and his/her culture have invested in the status and the major social role he/she carries- a man may be a father, a son, an employee, a club member and a client of the caseworker, all in the space of a few hours. His/her social role consists of the major function he/she carries at a given time with broadly designated behaviour, responsibility and rewards. His/her conflict may be caused by his recognition of what his role calls for and his emotional inability to meet it.

The person who comes as client to a social agency is always engulfed with problem. Regardless of the client's reason of coming for help, the client brings much more than concerns, needs or problems to the helping situation. The client brings the total self as a biological, psychosocial, cultural and spiritual being. This includes the resources of self and the personal environment and also environmental constraints. What the client brings includes perceptions of self, the situations and patterns of coping with stress and patterns of interpersonal relationships. The client's present need and/or problem is affected in part by the way developmental needs have been met and by needs arising from the diverse aspects of the client's lifestyle and from the expectations of the client's environment.

One of the major tasks of the worker is to understand the client as a unique person in a unique situation. There can never be total knowledge about a client; that is impossible. The worker seeks knowledge about the client that is needed for giving the service to him/her. The client is the major source of the facts used to develop the understanding of the person in the situation.

Before a person seeks help from a social agency, he or she has usually attempted to deal with a problem in a way that has worked with previous problems commonly known as “coping”. Coping results not only in solving problems but in the reduction of tension and anxiety. If the coping is not successful, a person may then turn to his or her informal support system, that is, friends, relatives, associates etc. Thus, individuals often come to the agency after a period of unsuccessful attempts to deal with their problems.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) What are the characteristics of the Person?

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- 2) What can be the roles of a social worker in understanding and dealing with the client?

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4.3 THE PROBLEM

Problem, according to the America Heritage dictionary is a “question or situation that presents uncertainty, perplexity or difficulty”. This definition is rather inadequate without elaboration for defining in this unit.

- 1) When does a situation become problematic?
- 2) When does a problematic situation become appropriate for social work concern?

Clarification of the term becomes somewhat easier if one looks at a problem in terms of both need and social functioning. Concern for and need of human systems is the basis of the social work response. When the need is seen as mitigating a block to social functioning, a problem of concern to social work is said to exist. This concern should be understood also to include potential blocks to human functioning so as to include preventive as well as ameliorative concerns. The perplexing situation is then related to removal of the obstacle that blocks need fulfillment. For problem solution, goals are related to need fulfillment.

According to Perlman the problem arises from some need or obstacle or accumulation of frustrations or maladjustments, and sometimes all of these together, which threatens or has already attacked the adequacy of the person's living situation or the effectiveness of his efforts to deal with it.

In order to work out a problem, one must first understand it, comprehend it and be oriented too. In an attempt to understand any problem, there must be some analysis of it, some translation into other familiar terms, some sets of associations which can be brought to it. This is the way caseworker functions when they are confronted with a problem. They must come to the point where they can see through it. The frame of reference which is used in seeing through the problem may vary, but the necessity to understand, it is universal. Moreover, one must understand not only the nature of the problem, as a social, economic or psychological entity but also the personal context of the individual exhibiting problem, in other words the personalities who are involved in it. No service can be administered effectively without such understanding.

Dimensions of how a problem arises:

- 1) The problem arises from some need or obstacle or accumulation of frustrations or maladjustments and sometimes all of these together which threatens or has already attacked the adequacy of the person's living situation or the effectiveness of his/her efforts to deal with it.
- 2) The social-functioning problem may rest in interpersonal relationships; for example, the inability of a parent to understand an adolescent child's need and thus, is so strict that the relationship between parent and child is at the point where there is open rebellion and an inability to discuss the situation
- 3) The problem may rest in an inability to negotiate with systems in the environment for e.g., a patient in a hospital is unable to ask the doctor the questions that are bothering the patient or to make his/her concerns known to the doctor.
- 4) The problem may rest in inadequate or inappropriate role performance; for example, the parent does not meet the nutritional needs of the child or maintain a suitable home for that child. May be one of the deficiency; that is, an individual does not have either the material resources or the personal capacity (temporary or permanent) to carry out the tasks needed for coping with a situation. An older person with a limited income and limited physical capacity may not be able to maintain a home or fix nutritious meals.
- 5) One may not have the preparation needed to carry out a social role. For example, the mother who did not have adequate mothering as a child and has received no instruction in childcare may not be able to properly care for her child because she just does not know how to care for small children.
- 6) May be due to disturbances or disorder resulting in intrapsychic turmoil, constriction or distortion. For e.g. the person may be mentally ill or have some perpetual difficulties which result in using inappropriate or ineffective means for coping with life situations.
- 7) May be there is discrepancies between expectations of a person and the demands of various segments of that person's environment. For example, an individual expects that food, clothing and shelter will be provided by a social

agency without work on his/her part, but the agency can only provide partially for those needs.

- 8) Problems may arise due to discrepancies between environmental demands and personal needs. For example, a teenage girl whose mother is ill is expected to care for younger siblings, but she needs time for completing her education and for socialization with her peers.

According to Perlman, the social functioning focus of social work began to emerge when problems were seen not as pathological but as part of life. Problems are frequent and unexpected in the human situations, and solutions are usually found without professional help. The concern of social work is narrowed to those problems in which persons cannot readily unblock the fulfillment of need with their own resources. Problem in social work usage refers to a social-functioning situation in which need fulfillment of any of the persons or systems involved is blocked or has a significant potential of blockage, and in which the person involved cannot by themselves remove the block to need fulfillment.

Characteristics of a client's problem:

- 1) The problems within the purview of social casework are those which vitally affect or are affected by a person's social functioning. The problem may be some unmet need-economic, medical, educational, recreational-which hampers or undermines a person's adequate living. Or it may be one of stress-psychological, social, physical- which causes the person to be ineffective or disturbed in carrying his/her social roles.
- 2) The multifaceted and dynamic nature of the client's problem makes necessary the selection by the caseworker and client of some part of it as the unit for work. Three main considerations enter into the choice of problem focus: 1) what the client wants 2) what the caseworker's professional judgment points to as possible and desirable solutions and 3) What the agency is for and can offer.
- 3) Problems in any part of a human being's living tend to have "chain reaction." This is because while in the study of a person he/she may be compartmentalized and analyzed as a biological or psychological or social entity, a person lives a dynamic interrelated whole, reacting to and upon the dynamic whole of his/her environment. Whatever hurts one part of his/her living will have its impact in other parts.
- 4) Any problem which a person encounters has both an objective and a subjective significance. A problem may be seen and understood by an onlooker; it is felt by its carrier, and it is experienced with the particularity of individual difference. Two aged men unable to work and need money. This is a simple problem for which there is a ready solution in the form of age old assistance, yet it may not feel simple for the two. One may feel depressed by the problem itself-that he is old, is found useless, and is dumped by employers and so on. The other may accept his ageing and feels he has a right to be "given a hand", but his anger and anxiety are aroused by the solution proffered-he cannot see why he must prove residence in his state or how he is expected to manage with so little money. Caseworker must elicit and often deal with such feelings so that they may implement rather than obstruct the client's work on his/her problem.

- 5) Not only do the external (objective) and internal (subjective) aspects of the problem co-exist, but either one may be the cause of the other. Everyone encounters situations in ones social living that, by his/her own momentary or chronic inability to deal with them, create internal problem in oneself. Casework helps in problem solving, provides other things, an intervention which breaks or modifies the cause- effect chain of difficulties. Since this intervention may in itself prove problematic to the client, the social casework must seek to understand his/her means and processes as astutely as is possible so that he/she may facilitate rather than complicate the client's problem solving efforts.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) What are the dimensions in which a problem may arise?

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- 2) At what stage can the social functioning of social work begin to emerge in the context of the problem of the client?

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4.4 THE PLACE

The place is a social service agency or a social service department of another kind of human welfare agency. The place to which the person comes for help with his/her problem is known as a social agency. The term “agency” has a misleading American sound, but it was used in British casework literature in the late nineteenth century. Present day usage refers to the institution within which the caseworker practices; sometimes it is the larger institution that is intended (e.g. the local authority) and at other times it is the smaller social work microcosm (e.g. the psychiatric social work department in a mental hospital). The institutions in which caseworkers practice (schools, child guidance clinics, children's departments of the hospitals and courts and so on) have all been established to achieve certain broad social purposes and caseworkers have a part to play in achieving them. Its purpose is to help individuals with the particular social handicaps which hampers good personal or family living and with the problems created by faulty person-to-person, person-to-group or person-to-situation relationships. This agency's purpose and functions come to life in the person and professional performance of the caseworker.

Social casework agencies differ one from the other in a number of ways, but there are three major factors that determine their classification:

- 1) Their source of support- public taxation (child welfare, physical and mental health programmes etc) or voluntary contribution.
- 2) Their source of professional authority – primary agencies carry full authority and responsibility for their social functions and secondary agencies derive their authority and responsibility from the host agency.
- 3) Their special function and area of concern- primary agencies both public and private, may define certain areas of social need as the particular fielding in which they give services. Secondary, casework help is related to the work of some other profession, such as medicine, education or law and to its specific knowledge and purpose.

Perlman has described some of the characteristics of Agency:

- 1) The social agency is an organization fashioned to express the will of a society or of some group in that society. An agency embodies a society's decision to protect its members against social breakdowns, to prevent their maladjustments and/or to promote the development of better or higher levels of humans functioning.
- 2) Each social agency develops a programme by which to meet the particular areas of need with which it sets out to deal-The agency programme consists of the aids and activities by which its intent is translated into provisions of help. The ways and means which an agency programme provides will convey its function effectively or not, depending on a number of factors: money, the knowledge and competency of the agency staff; the interest, resources and support of the community; the consistency between ascertained needs and the proffered means.
- 3) The social agency has a structure by which it organizes and delegates its responsibilities and tasks, and governing policies and procedures by which it stabilizes and systematizes its operations-structure, as it may be depicted on an organizational chart, is the agency's anatomy. The agency's body is made up of many members with different purposes and powers, all dependent upon one another in the body's total working. The structure of an agency identifies and assigns separate and joint responsibilities, authorities and tasks to each personnel and demarcates the relationship among various functionaries in the total agency body.
- 4) The social agency is a living, adaptable organism susceptible to being understood and changed, much as other living organisms-If agency structure may be seen as its anatomy, its operations may represent its physiology, and the purposes, attitudes, and goal directions of its personnel and board are its psychology. The circumstance of its inception, the person's who nurtured it and the social situations it encountered will have affected the agency's present behaviour.
- 5) Every staff member in an agency speaks and acts for some part of the agency's function, and the caseworker represents the agency in its individualized problem-solving help-What a caseworker can do with and for his client derives

both from his professional commitment and skill and from the agency which hires him/her. In order to represent the agency, he/she must be psychologically identified with the purpose and the policies of his/her agencies. Every social agency banks a fund of knowledge about the experience with the particular problems it has set out to solve.

- 6) The caseworker, while representing his/her agency, is first and foremost a professional who perform various roles - The social caseworker practices in the conviction that individual human welfare is the purpose and the test of social policy; that his/her attitude combine open enquiry with dedication to the people and the person he/she serves; that he/she maintains "social-conscience" and that he/she conducts himself ethically in all his/her professional transactions.

Social work is an agency-based profession. The agency is the immediate environment of the worker-client interaction. This interaction often takes place in an office or building identified as the "agency". The influence of the agency is strong even when the interaction takes place elsewhere in the community. As an employee, the worker is a part of the agency system, and because of this the worker is accountable to the agency. The form and content of the service offered must be within the agency's purview and guidelines. The manner in which the agency is structured and functions greatly influence the nature of the worker-client interaction. The agency also provides resources for both the worker and the client.

The agencies are established to carry out broad social functions as healing and rehabilitation in the case of hospitals, ensuring good parental care in the case of children's department of the local authority and so on. The worker is expected to contribute to these objectives and to clarify and develop his/her own function within this broad social purpose. Yet, the most important aspect of agency function is that it constitutes the meeting point of social worker and the client, it is what brings them together and enables them to interact in professional manner. The community provides financial other types of supports and sanction for the agency; community attitudes impact the agency and its capacity to deliver services. It also has expectations for the nature and outcome of services. There are two kinds of expectations: the professional and the bureaucratic. The greater the organizations, the larger the differences. Bureaucratic expectations call for loyalty to the organization; acceptance of authority from achievement of goals, on specialization and on efficiency. Professional expectations call for commitment to professional values and to the service of clients; ability to have a broad span of decision-making power; collegial relationship and an emphasis on meeting client needs and allowing for client self-determination and individualization.

Before a worker can effectively deliver service as a professional in a bureaucratic organization, the worker must first understand the organization. The first task in understanding an agency is to define its boundaries. The second task is to determine environmental factors that influence the structure and functioning of the agency. The third task is to understand the structure and functioning of the agency system.

Social workers not only need to understand the agency in which they are employed but they also need to be able to understand other social agencies working in the allied areas. This is important if the worker is to help the clients in order to use the resources and services of other agencies.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

1) What are the functions of an agency?

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2) What are the characteristics of a social case work agency?

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4.5 THE PROCESS

The process, is a progressive transaction between the professional helper (the caseworker) and the client. It consists of a series of problem solving operations carried out within a meaningful relationship. The end of this process is contained in its means to influence the client-person that he/she develops effectiveness in coping with his/her problem and /or to so influence the problem as to resolve it or reduce its effects. As the social worker develops skill in the problem-solving process, thinking about the phenomena being confronted will begin to take place in orderly steps. These steps appear to be simple but are quite complex in application.

Sal Hofstein states: "Process refers to the recurrent patterning of a sequence of change over time and in a particular direction." It is important to note three qualities of this process: 1) recurrent patterning or stages 2) takes place over time 3) in a particular direction (the process is irreversible). The problem-solving process as used in social work has its source in the classic work of **John Dewey** and in his description of the thought process used by human beings when confronted with difficult situations. Social work problem solving is finding a way through feeling, thinking, and acting. It progresses over time in a cyclical, irreversible manner that is focused on removing blocks to need fulfillment that individuals cannot remove with their own resources.

In order to understand what the casework process must include in its problem-solving help, it is necessary for the social caseworker to take stock first of the kinds of blockings which occur in people's normal problem-solving effort. These six are among the most common:

- 1) A problem cannot be solved if the necessary tangible means and resources are not available to the person. A client, for instance, may see and assess his/her problem and its solution accurately and may lack only the material provision for it.

- 2) Sometimes, people are unable to solve their problems simply out of ignorance or misapprehension about the facts of the problems or the facts of existing ways of meeting it.
- 3) A problem is difficult of resolution when the person who has depleted or drained of emotional or physical energy. He/she needs to mobilized himself/herself-”pull himself together’ - when he/she must plan and act according to plan.
- 4) When problems sets off a conflagration of feeling, a person’s thought processes, delicately attuned as they are to his/her emotions become clouded and tumbled about.
- 5) The problem may lie within the person: i.e, he/she may have become subject to, or victim of, emotions that chronically, over a long time have governed his/her thinking and action.
- 6) Some people find problems in solving a difficult situation because they have never developed systematic habits of orderly methods of thinking and planning. So, the difficulty lies chiefly in the person’s lack of experience in organizing his/her power to grapple with problems.

In the casework relationship, a constant medium is provided that is accepting, nurturing and supporting at the same time that the stimulus of problem-solving work is injected to promote the client’s effort to feel, to be or to act in the ways leading to his/her better social adjustment. The casework process sustains and fortifies the functions of the client’s ego. The first part of the casework process, as in all problem-solving, is to ascertain and clarify the facts of the problem. The second aspect of casework problem-solving grows out of and interweaves with the ongoing eliciting of facts, it is thinking through the facts. The conclusive phase of each problem-solving effort in casework is the making of some choice or decision.

Stages of Problem-solving Process

- 1) Preliminary statement of the problem,
 - 2) Statement of preliminary assumptions about the nature of the problem,
 - 3) Selection and collection of information,
 - 4) Analysis of information available,
 - 5) Development of a plan,
 - 6) Implementation of the plan, and
 - 7) Continuous monitoring and evaluation.
- 1) **Preliminary statement of the problem**-A clear statement of the problem is necessary before processing to subsequent steps. Often, problem statement tends to be vague, global, and lacking in precision. For example, school dropouts or unwed mothers are often referred to as problems. A more adequate formulation in the area of unwed mothers might be: lack of educational resources for teenage pregnant girls. In this statement, the need of the individual and society is education.
 - 2) **Statement of preliminary assumptions about the nature of the problem**-This step is necessary to help make explicit the type of information needed

for understanding and planning. As the problem is stated, implicit assumptions are made about its nature and cause, which provide indications as to the need in the situation and as to the block to need fulfillment.

- 3) **Selection and collection of information**-Sources for information should include a variety of perspectives that may be chosen from historical, social-psychological, biological, economic, political, religious, and ethical understandings.

Both the facts of the problem itself and the meaning of the problem to those concerned are important. Skill in the collection of information also calls for skill in communication and social interaction with persons who are sources of the information. The values of social work call for the client to be a primary source. There is a need to determine and accumulate relevant evidence about the situation, and this evidence needs to be related to the salient features of the situation.

- 4) **Analysis of information available**- Analysis of information is influenced and directed by the purpose for which the analysis is to be used. Other purposes include determination of feasible goals and possible outcomes and of possible plans of action, interpretation of the meaning of the information gathered, and evaluation. The cyclical nature of the process becomes very apparent, for one returns to analysis as an ingredient of each step of the process. The carrying out of the process generates new information.

- 5) **Development of a plan**-Information and its analysis lead to understanding of what can be done to remove obstacles blocking need fulfillment. A social worker uses assessment in developing a plan of action.

Plans develop from a consideration of a variety of possible strategies and techniques. As a plan becomes more specific, the social worker will return to early steps in the process to gather and analyze new information needed for the specifics of planning. Consideration of a variety of plans is important in creative planning.

- 6) **Implementation of the plan**-In social work, implementation involves interaction between people and is interventive in nature. It is action based on thinking that has its source in feelings about concern or need. In addition, it is action based on substantial knowledge from many sources that explain and predict behaviour of persons in the situation.

- 7) **Continuous Monitoring & Evaluation of Plan**-This step may result in redefinition of the problem, expanded information gathering and analysis, of reformulation of the plan. While the plan is in operation, it needs to be reviewed regularly whereas once the goal has been reached, evaluation is required to be undertaken. Regardless of the outcome of the plan, evaluation of what happened can lead to an understanding that can be transferred to other situations and to more effective problem solving in those situations.

The intent of the casework process is to engage the person himself/herself both in working on and in coping with the one or several problems that confront him/her and to do so by such means as may stand him/her in good stead as he/she goes forward in living.

These therapeutic means are as follows:

- 1) The provision of a therapeutic relationship that sustains the client and effects the nature of his/her emotional relation to his/her problems;
- 2) The provision of a systematic, though always flexible, way by which the client may discuss and work over the nature of his/her problem, his/her relation to it and its potential solutions; and
- 3) The provision of such opportunities and aids (those of communication and/or resources) as will further exercise and implement the client's adaptive action upon his/her problems.

Three essential operations of problem-solving process are

- 1) The facts that constitute and bear upon the problem must be ascertained and grasped. Such facts may be of objective reality and of subjective reaction, of cause and effect, of relatedness between the person and his/her problems, of the solution sought and of the actual means available;
- 2) The facts must be thought about. The facts must be played upon and organized by ideas-ideas springing from knowledge and experience and subject to the governing aim of problem solution;
- 3) Some choice or decision must be made that is the end result of the consideration of the particular facts and that affects or has the intent of resolving the problem.

The process can be conceptualized as having four major components: assessment, planning, action and termination. Although assessment precedes planning, planning precedes action and action precedes termination, the process is cyclical in nature.

Planning often leads to the need for new or different understanding of the person in the situation (assessment). Action often produces new information for use in understanding or demonstrates the need for additional planning. Evaluation, the assessment of what has happened as a result of action, is ongoing in the process and leads to new understanding and sometimes to new plans and action. Thus, all four stages are always present, but at various points in the work one or more may be the focus and receive the most attention.

All four stages as well as the interactional process constitute intervention. All can influence changes in the transactions between clients and the systems in their environment. All can influence the social functioning of individuals and social systems.

The aim of casework process is to engage the client with his/her problem and his/her will to do something about it in a working relationship with the agency, its intentions and special means of helpfulness. The context of the process is a fairly constant one, and its method is a fairly systematic one-as constant and as systematic as a process keyed to living, feeling, changing human beings can be-while it yet remains fluid and flexible.

Finally, for the solution or mitigation of many problems there must exist certain material means or accessible opportunities which are available to the needful person and which he/she can be helped to use. Money, medical care, nursery schools, scholarship, short-stay homes, foster homes, recreational facilities- these

are the kind of resources that any person may need in order to resolve a given problem in his/her daily living. The caseworker should know about these resources or know how to become informed of them. He/She should be able to pick the right ones imaginatively in their relation to the client's problem.

Check Your Progress IV

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

1) What are the stages of problem-solving process?

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2) What is your conceptual understanding of the aim of the casework process?

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4.6 LET US SUM UP

At the door of the agency, stands the person, who has a problem. It may be simple or complex, old or new, commonplace or peculiar, but it always has significance to the person: it is something that he/she is experiencing as he/she is frustrated in his/her present living situation, and it is something that he/she finds he/she cannot cope with unaided. The problem which the person carries to the agency, sometimes clutches to him/her tightly, sometimes distastefully held out at fingers tip, hurts or incapacitates him today. The social agency is prepared to receive and if possible to give help to the person whose problem brings him/her to it. The agency has a stated purpose, a special set of functions, structures, policies and procedures, which they have validated. In other words, the problem must be one with which the agency is equipped to help. From the facts regarding the problem and out of the client's verbal and behavioural responses, the caseworker's understanding of the client grows. The caseworker understands what are the inner and outer resources the client brings to the problems solving situation.

The caseworker must not only be a keen listener but also an active agent in helping the client to communicate about his/her problem and focus his/her attention and expand his/her understanding of the client. He/she must also focus on the purpose of the agency and ability to help.

Problem solving implies that both the caseworker and his/her client are simultaneously and consciously, though differently, engaged in problem-solving from the beginning. The clients sharing and working-through his feelings, and the impetus and help given to him/her to know and think about his/her attitudes,

behaviour, needs and goals are in themselves an experience and experience of adaptation. The by-product of both these ongoing activities yields the caseworker a large part of what becomes his/her diagnosis. And the taking of next steps out of considered choice, the planning of action or the internal settlement arrived at involves the executive and integrative functions of the ego.

Three interrelated guides have been set down to achieve and hold focus on dealing with helping the client who comes to the agency: the selection 1) of that problem or aspect of which the client himself feels is most important; 2) of that part of his total problem which falls within the helping function of the agency; and 3) of that problem which in the worker's judgment most need and can yield to help

The mental work of examining the parts of a problem for the import of their particular nature and organization, for the interrelationship among them, for the relationship between them and the means to their solution is known as a diagnostic process. Diagnosis must result in a "design for action". Probably no process has been as troubling to caseworkers as diagnosis. The content of casework diagnosis falls into the triangular pattern as that of other professional design for action. It consist of: 1) The nature of the problem brought and the goals sought by the client, in their relationship to 2) the nature of the person who bears the problem (his social and psychological situation and functioning) and who seeks (or needs) help with his problem, in relation to 3) the nature of the purpose of the agency and the kind of help it can offer and /or make available. The content of the casework diagnosis, then, is focused, weighted and bounded by the purpose and means of the client and the agency.

4.7 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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