

MSW-007
CASE WORK AND
COUNSELLING: WORKING
WITH INDIVIDUALS

Block

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SOCIAL CASE WORK

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BLOCK INTRODUCTION

In the previous block you learned about social case work in the Indian context. In the present block you will study more about Social Case Work practice.

Unit one: “Case Worker Client Relationship and Principles of Case Work” deals with the nature of “relationship” in case work and attributes and principles of case worker and client relationship.

The second unit namely “Supportive Techniques of Helping” elaborates the techniques like acceptance, assurance, facilitation of expression of feeling, advocacy etc. to help a client in confronting a problem.

The third unit describes the “Social Case Work Process”. This unit will enable you to have an idea about social investigation, social diagnosis and intervention.

The fourth unit talks about the “Tools of Case Work”. In this unit an elaborate description of the tools is provided, which include interview, recording, home visits etc.

The fifth unit deals with some theoretical approaches in case work. The unit will enable you to know more about existential theory, cognitive theory, behavioural modification theory, problem solving approach and eclectic approach.

After going through this block you will have a broad understanding of social case work practice.

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UNIT 1 CASE WORKER CLIENT RELATIONSHIP AND PRINCIPLES OF CASE WORK

Contents

**Archana Dassi*

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
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1.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the types and nature of relationship;
- understand the uniqueness of Casework Client Relationship;
- understand the attributes of a casework relationship;
- understand the guiding principles of Casework Client Relationship; and
- learn the modalities for the usage of the principles.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Human beings as social animals thrive and prosper on social interactions with fellow beings. Growth and development of an individual's personality depends largely on his/her relationships with significant others. Human relationships are indeed known for their warmth, comfort, security, nurture and emotions. Relationship is a catalyst, an enabling dynamism in the support, nurture and freeing of people's energies and motivation towards problem solving and the use of help. Vital relationships between people arise out of shared and emotionally charged situations. The climate for the growth of human personality, the nutrient for its development, and the stimulus for its subtle adaptations are emotionally charged relationships with other human beings. The very first contact that all persons have when they are born is with their mothers. Parent child relationship is the most vital relationship that contributes in a major way towards laying the foundation for one's personality development, confidence, attitudes, towards self and others. It would be no exaggeration to state that our very existence is in terms of our relationship with people around us – our family, friends, colleagues, relatives and others. All the societal institutions around us - family, marriage, caste are all based on social relationships.

1.2 NATURE OF RELATIONSHIPS

According to Helen Harris Perlman (1957), 'Relationship is a human being's feeling or sense of emotional bonding with one another. It leaps into being like an electric current or it emerges and develops cautiously when emotion is aroused by and invested in someone or something and that someone or something "connects back" responsively. We feel "related" when we feel at one with another (person or object) in some heartfelt way'.

Relationships may be 'good' or 'bad', brief or enduring, complex and heartfelt or superficial and skin deep, swift and spontaneous or carefully built. But whatever be its nature and substance, its dynamics are the presence, recognition, deposit, reception and responsiveness of emotion between individuals or between a person and an object or activity by which he/she has been moved. The emotions felt and shared may be joy as well as anguish, gratification as well as deprivation, hope and despair, merriment and despondency, rage and gracefulness, guilt and hostility and any or all of these. To illustrate, a child who is extremely attached to his/her parents, feels joyous on meeting them. On the other hand, an abandoned child would react in a different way on meeting the family. The emotions felt in the latter case may range from hatred, anger to resentment. In most mutually reciprocative relationships, there is a hunger for emotional bonding and dependency like in parent child relationships. In the usual life of an adult, hunger for emotional bonding with others is gratified in many ways- in love and friendship bonds, in marriage and in parenthood. The words used to describe a meaningful relationship are- warmth, love, care, acceptance, responsiveness, concern and understanding. It may be remembered that any relationship that seeks to enable a person, child or adult to feel secure and move forward, to risk new learning and new experiences combines a warm acceptance of the person in his/her uniqueness as a human being.

1.3 RELATIONSHIP IN CASE WORK

Relationship is termed as the *basis* of social casework. The relationship between the caseworker and the client is of utmost importance. It is the principal of life which vivifies the process of study, diagnosis and treatment and makes casework a living, warmly human experience. Social work thrives in its belief in the basic worth and dignity of individuals and enhancing their capacities to reach their human potential to the fullest. Relationship between the caseworker and the client is the medium through which the knowledge of human nature and of the individual is used; knowledge alone, without skill in relationship is inadequate. Relationship is also the channel of the entire casework process; through it, flow the mobilization of the capacities of the individual and mobilization of the community resources; through it flow the skills in interviewing, study, diagnosis and treatment (Biestek: 1957).

1.4 UNIQUENESS OF CASE WORK CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

Casework client relationship is different from other relationships that exist in society at large like the parent-child relationship, teacher-pupil, friend-friend and colleague-colleague. The casework relationship differs from other relationships

on a number of points. One needs to analyze and compare other relationships with casework relationship keeping in mind the levels of equality, mutual benefits being derived, presence and the level of emotional involvement in the relationship. Firstly, it may be borne in mind that casework relationship is temporary in nature. It begins with the referral of the client to the caseworker with a problem and terminates after the completion of the casework process and treatment. Parent- child relationship or relationships between siblings are lifelong relationships as they are tied by blood and kinship. Secondly, the emotional component in the casework relationship is not very deep and penetrating. This is unlike the relationships that exist between the spouses, parent- child or siblings. Though casework process is an emotionally charged one, it is operationalized in such a way that the expression of emotions is controlled and purposeful, focusing towards achieving clear cut goals of client's well being and treatment. Such an approach is missing in the relationships cited above. The third difference between casework relationship and others, is based on the levels of equality and mutuality. For example, friend-friend relationship is characterized by its equality, mutual help and sharing. The caseworker and the client are fundamentally equal as human beings. In a casework relationship however, caseworker takes on the role of a professional helper while client is the person who needs help. Thus the grounds of equality are not uniform since in this relationship, caseworker is the person having knowledge, skills and is assigned to help the client through a professional relationship. Client on the hand is a person having some maladjustment and in need of professional help. Thus, this type of relationship is not based on mutual help and equality. One can also compare the casework relationship with that of a teacher-pupil relationship, which is more on an intellectual level. The teacher or the *Guru*, in the Indian context is highly respected as it is the *Guru* who guides the *shishya* about the values, inspires, transmits knowledge and information. However, in this relationship, there is hardly any intentional use of emotional involvement. If at all emotions do crop up in the teacher-student relationship, they are accidental and more on the part of the pupils rather than the teachers. Casework relationships, as mentioned earlier are throughout highly charged with emotions in a purposeful manner.

Caseworker client relationship also differs from other professional relationships such as doctor-patient and psychiatrist-client. From an Indian perspective, health has become a serious area of concern. The medical services available are insufficient and lack adequate infrastructure, quality and maintenance. Doctor is considered only next to God. It is not a custom to question the doctor about the nature of one's illness, leave aside enquiring about the line of treatment. Patients in most cases are the passive recipients of medical treatment being administered by the doctor. This is in contrast to the casework client relationship where client is an equal partner in the treatment process and is encouraged to open up and express inner thoughts and feelings.

The only relationship that casework is close to, yet distinct in its finer aspects is with the Psychiatrist-Client relationship. In this relationship, client is encouraged to talk about his/her problems. However, the psychiatrist focusses on the unconscious mind of the client in contrast to the caseworker who pays attention on the environmental manipulation and working on the personality maladjustment at the conscious level of the client's mind.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) Explain the term Relationship. Why is it considered as a necessary ingredient for the delivery of casework relationship?

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- 2) How is the casework relationship different from the other social and professional relationships?

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1.5 ATTRIBUTES OF CASEWORK RELATIONSHIP

Casework relationship goes much beyond merely a friendly relationship between the caseworker and the client. Clients bring into the casework relationship their feelings, attitudes and behaviour which they have experienced with others. The client therefore tends to react to the casework situation in a manner derived from his/her personal experiences. Casework focusses on understanding the client, his/her psychosocial needs and making a 'contact' to build the relationship. If this contact is to be of any value at all, the client must have confidence in the worker's good faith and the worker must have respect for the client as an individual. It is the responsibility of the caseworker to establish this relationship. This professional relationship is formed with the purpose of developing in the client a personally satisfying and socially useful life. It is the individualized purpose which is unique to every relationship and is set to be achieved in each case. The conscious purposive and deliberate efforts to develop a helping relationship comprises of the following attributes:

- 1) **Warmth:** Warmth connotes some positive, lively, outgoing interest in another person (or object or activity), a spontaneous reaching out to take in another with pleasure or compassion (Perlman: 1979). By exhibiting an open, 'warm' attitude, caseworker is able to convey to the client his/her openness and concern to understand the client's problem, client's attitudes and sharing of experiences. Warmth is demonstrated by the worker when he/she attends to the client with attention, listens patiently, gives confidence and conveys an understanding of the client's problem. By this he gains trust of his client.
- 2) **Empathy:** Empathy means feeling *with* and *into* another person, being able to get into the other person's shoes ((Perlman: 1979). It may occur spontaneously

or may be a carefully learnt 'listening with the third ear' and responding in tune to the other person. Empathy involves looking at a situation/ case from another person's perspective. Through empathy, the caseworker is able to convey to the client his/her understanding of client's problem with accuracy and 'oneness'.

Empathy is different from sympathy which gives a bond of feeling of being helped by another person. The caseworker conveys sympathy by saying statements such as 'I understand how you feel', 'I can feel that you are feeling sad and upset'. Empathy is leading one self to another to feel into and take in the moment's essence of the other. By feeling caseworker's empathy, the client feels understood and important. It may be noted here that empathy does not mean the loss of objectivity. Caseworker in a professional relationship with the client, remains objective by being aware of his/her own emotional and reactive responses to persons and situations.

- 3) **Genuineness:** To be genuine and congruent, the caseworker relies on his/her own moment to moment felt experiences in the relationship with the client. To be genuine is to be free of pretension. It is to have a sense of wholeness of being put together, of knowing who and what one is, what one's guiding values are, and as a result of being on fairly good terms with oneself. Genuineness is the product of life experiences that make it possible to be self observant, self aware and self accepting of strengths and limitations (Perlman: 1979). A genuine and congruent relationship consists of a consistent and honest openness and behaviour matching with the verbalized intentions and values of social work. For example, a school social worker is asked about contacts of an adoption agency regarding which she/he may not be aware of. It would be honest and genuine on the part of the worker to be frank and admit to the client about his/her lack of information. If possible, the worker may however, assure the client of making an effort to seek information about the agency and getting back to the client within a stipulated time. The worker must also then get back to the client or give a source of contact that may provide the requisite information.
- 4) **Authority:** Authority is an essential element of caseworker client relationship. Authority has been referred to by Perlman (1979) as 'ableness' to be used *for* the client and not *over* or *against* the client. Authority in a casework relationship does not mean domination or willful imposition. Client has the right to accept, reject or modify advice given by the worker. Authority rather conveys the meaning of carrying those rights and powers that are inherent in special knowledge and are vested in special functions (Perlman: 1957). Having authority does not make the worker superior to the client. It rather implies that the caseworker possess the expertise in understanding, assessing and dealing with the problem faced by the client. Authority is that of knowledge and expertise. The Client goes to a worker in need of help who has the authority of knowledge and skills, someone who knows more than him/her.

Hand in gloves with authority comes the responsibility to be borne by the caseworker. The responsibility is to make judgements on the basis of theoretical knowledge and practical experience. For example, let us take up a case of a man who fears that his wife is trying to kill him. He cites several incidents to the worker to prove that his wife was conspiring to end his life. On meeting the client's wife, the worker finds her to be a fairly reasonable

and objective person who might not plot her husband's murder. Thus, on the basis of assessment of the client's expression of feelings, behaviour and gaining facts of his environment, the worker gains a wholistic understanding of the client's life situation. The worker draws up the conclusion that the client is suffering from delusions and needs psychiatrist's help. Here, the worker has every authority to refer the client to a psychiatrist and it is also his/her moral responsibility as a professional not to continue with the case if she/he feels that the client's problems would be best handled by another expert. Thus, authority and responsibility go hand in hand.

5) Transference and Counter Transference:

The most frequently encountered necessity to 'work' a relationship occurs with the phenomenon called transference or transference reactions. To any emotionally charged relationship, each of us bring conscious and unconscious feelings and attitudes that originally arose in or still belong to the earlier important relationships (Perlman: 1957). For example, in casework with an adolescent girl to help her regarding her career options, the worker listens to the girl's aspirations and dilemmas. The worker helps her to draw a choice of careers helping her to keep in mind her aptitude as well as preferences and also arranges for her visit to a nearby vocational training centre. In such a case, what may happen is that the girl may begin to feel toward the worker as she felt towards her mother/grandmother when she was young. The degree of emotional satisfaction which the client gets from such a relationship is far beyond the realistic limits of the caseworker-client relationship. It may be remembered that the client who approaches the agency often feels helpless and inadequate for not being able to tackle his/her own problem. Due to this, the clients are prone to transfer irrational elements into the relationship and want to regress, desiring to have parental nurture and parental domination. These however, are damaging to the client since it can tempt the client to stay in an unrealistic, infantile dependence instead of moving towards self reliance in the relationship.

These transferred elements could be affection, attraction or repulsion, yearning or defensiveness, liking or dislike and may occur at any point in the helping relationship. **Transference** is said to have taken place, when the client reacts inappropriately, with excessive or distorted feelings towards the caseworker. As seen in many casework relationships, clients often remark to the worker, *You are like a father/mother/sister to me* or may say, *let us be friends*. Transference may also manifest itself in the way the client reacts towards the worker by being very obedient, helpless and approval seeking. The worker has to recognize these non verbal cues. The effort in the casework relationship is to maintain reality and to keep the client and the worker aware of their joint objective, their separate and realistic identities and their focus upon working some better adaptation between the client and his/her current problem. Transference manifestations need to be recognized, identified and dealt with as they occur. Every effort has to be made to manage the casework relationship and to give minimum encouragement to transference (Perlman: 1957).

The caseworker may also be expected to unconsciously transfer into the professional relationship, certain positive or negative reactions that are realistically uncalled for, for example, distrust and hostility or strong feelings of attachment. This phenomenon is called **Counter Transference** that is, transference on the part of

the helping person. Any subjective involvement on the part of the caseworker with the client or client's problem may be part of a real counter transference or it may represent only a single instance of loss of professional objectivity. To illustrate, let us take up the case of a medical social worker who worked at the emergency ward of the hospital and was handling a man who had brought his wife to the hospital in a critical condition from a road accident. The man was in a heightened state of emotional trauma while narrating about the love for his wife and how the accident had taken place. The worker got so moved with the details of the case that she began to identify with the man and somewhere related his life with her own. Finally, when his wife died, both the client as well as the worker sobbed. In this case, the worker got involved with her own personal feelings and lost the objectivity. She was unable to provide professional help that she ought to.

The caseworker must remain objective throughout the helping relationship and be aware of his/her own feelings. If at all, they do crop up, they must be handled and controlled.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

1) What are the characteristics of a Caseworker Client Relationship?

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1.6 PRINCIPLES OF CASEWORKER CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

Principles of casework are principles of action, based upon a fundamental which influences, guides and directs. The principles are also referred to as qualities or elements as they are present in every good casework relationship and are the constitutive parts of the relationship (Biestek). There are seven principles of the casework relationship:

- A) Principle of Individualization
- B) Principle of Purposeful expression of feelings
- C) Principle of Controlled emotional involvement
- D) Principle of Acceptance
- E) Principle of Non Judgmental attitude
- F) Principle of Client's right to Self Determination
- G) Principle of Confidentiality

Let us take these principles one by one and get a clear understanding on their application in the Indian context:

A) PRINCIPLE OF INDIVIDUALIZATION

Individualization is the recognition and understanding of each client's unique qualities and the differential use of principles and methods in assisting each of

them towards a better adjustment. Individualization is based upon the right of human beings to be 'individuals' and to be treated not just as human beings but as a human being with his/her personal differences (Biestek 1957).

Principle of individualization emanates from the basic recognition of each person as a unique entity. Individualization is one of the essential notes in the concept of a person who according to Boethius is 'an individual substance of rational nature'. Each person is individualized by his/her heredity, environment, innate intellectual capacity, strengths and limitations. Each person experiences unique life situations from birth, forms distinct inter personal relationships. The thoughts, feelings, behaviours and capacities of each individual are distinct and differ from each other. Thus their problems and the help they need also vary from each other. Casework help, therefore, must be differentiated to meet the particular needs of the individual clients and to help the clients use their abilities and resources for self help in order to work towards problem resolution and better adjustment.

Each person is conscious of being unique (Biestek: 1957). This awareness is particularly poignant when the client approaches the agency in a state of maladjustment in social functioning. The client needs the worker's undivided and individualized attention to discuss his/her problem. By gaining worker's respect for his/her as an individual with rights and needs, the client feels understood. The success of helping relationship depends upon the individualization of each case by the worker, treating each person as a unique individual having special problems rather than being treated as a 'case/category/patient'. It is observed many times in agencies that clients who approach the agency for help are referred to as *patients* by the staff. This makes an individual clients feel like 'medical patient'. Clients must be referred to with their names exhibiting respectful manner. This is the initiation of individualization.

Pre Requisites for application of Principle of Individualization

- *An open and unbiased attitude:* It is essential for the caseworker to be aware of personal biases and prejudices and not to let them have an influence in establishing casework relationship. Accurate assessment of the client's problem, his/her life situations requires the worker to be objective and free from pre conceived notions and prejudices, if any. The prejudices can pertain to diverse categories or groups like low caste, class or gender distinctions, destitute, drug abuser, alcoholics, criminal, sex worker, unwed mother or people indulging in pre or extra marital relationships etc. A worker while handling cases must be honest and aware of personal feelings, needs and counter transference tendencies.
- *Knowledge of human behaviour:* Caseworkers often have to deal with complex human behaviours of people with diverse personalities. It is imperative for the caseworker to have inter-disciplinary knowledge and understanding derived from psychology, sociology, psychiatry etc.
- *Listening and Observing:* Attentive listening to the narration of client's problem brings an understanding of the problem for the caseworker. As the client talks about his/her relationships with family and community, caseworker is able to gain a wholistic understanding about the client. Competent and professional listening requires not only paying attention to the words being said by the client but observing and analyzing the body gestures, physical

signs of hesitation, emotions and facial expressions. Ability to interpret non verbal communication can yield a lot of information to the caseworker which can help in imparting future direction to the caseworker.

- *Moving with the client's pace:* As the caseworker sees each client, he/she must begin where the client is and proceed at the client's pace. In the application of the principle of individualization, correct pacing is the secret to the timing at every stage of the casework process- study, diagnosis and treatment. For example, caseworker working with a HIV positive person might be interested in quickly gathering information about how the client contracted the virus or to fill up all the personal details in the case sheet perform. But this kind of hurry may harm/retard the building of trust between the worker and the client. Hastening the client to divulge details, especially intimate information before he/she is ready would stall the helping process and hamper the casework relationship. Caseworker has to move at the client's pace and allow time to the client to develop trust in the caseworker.
- *Ability to enter into feelings of people:* The feelings of the client are his/her most individualized characteristics. Recognizing uniqueness in each person implies the realization that each person's coping strategies are different and every person responds to his/her life situations in a distinct manner. For example failure in board examinations may lead one adolescent to commit suicide while another may strive to work harder next time to clear the examination. Another example may be considered of a women engaged in sex work. While one sex worker may enjoy her work due to the lure of money that she is paid, another sex worker might have feelings of guilt and shame. Thus, similar life situations may bring about different responses from different individuals. Each person is distinct and possesses own individualized reactions to situations. Individualization requires sensitivity and a response to these feelings. The principle quality of the response is warmth, and to enter into the 'feeling' experience of the client and understand client's perspective.
- *Ability to keep perspective:* The emotional involvement of the caseworker should be controlled and be directed to the larger situation. This enables the worker to keep a wholistic view of the case and progress further in the helping relationship. For example, while narrating an incident of sexual abuse, the client is likely to talk of the incident in a detailed manner, sharing intricate feelings about the traumatic experience. In such a case, the worker has to empathize with the client at her *here and now* feelings and also keep the larger picture in mind. The worker would be required to study and assess the impact of the incidents of abuse on the client's relationship on her mind, her relationships with the significant others, stress management skills etc. Having a wholistic perspective helps the caseworker to keep the focus on the client in his/her entirety and analyze the interplay of psychosocial, conscious and unconscious factors affecting the client.

Demonstration of Principle of Individualization

- a) *Thoughtfulness and understanding:* Thoughtfulness in working out small details aids in demonstrating individualized attention to the client. For example, a casework meeting with a street and working child may require the child to leave his work for the appointment which would cost him a day's

labour. Similarly scheduling an appointment with a professional who is unable to come at the scheduled time would be insensitive. As far as possible, appointments should be best suited as per the client's convenience.

- b) *Providing Privacy in Conducting Interviews:* In many agencies, casework interviews are conducted in an open office space. This hinders the privacy of the client as he/she is not comfortable in talking openly about the problem. This is a great hindrance to the casework confidentiality. The noise may also create barrier in communication as the caseworker is unable to give undivided and individualized attention to the client. As far as possible separate cabins should be allotted to different case worker.
- c) *Care in keeping appointments:* As mentioned earlier, appointments have to suit both the client and the caseworker. Caseworker must keep a diary and promptly keep the appointments. If at all, the meetings have to be rescheduled due to an urgent work, client must be informed in advance. A promptly kept appointment gives a feeling of reassurance and importance to the client.
- d) *Preparation for interview:* One of the best immediate preparations for individualizing the client is to review the past written case records. This helps in refreshing the details of the earlier discussions and enables the caseworker to plan ahead for the next meeting in a purposeful manner.
- e) *Engaging the client:* Demonstrating the principle of individualization involves engagement of the client according to his/her capacity in the casework process i.e. in the study, assessment and treatment. For example, casework with a woman who is in a disturbed marital relationship would imply encouraging her to objectively assess her situation, weighing of the probable alternatives beforehand incase she wants to be out of the marriage. She may be helped to carry out a cost benefit analysis of each of her alternatives before taking a decision. Enabling the client in selecting the treatment goals and encouraging the person to make a choice stimulates client's self confidence and demonstrates the principle of individualization.
- f) *Flexibility:* Caseworker needs to be open minded and modify the treatment goals in accordance with the client's needs, knowledge about client's life situations and problems. The ability to adjust goals and methods calls for mature judgement, objectivity and skill on the part of caseworker. Flexibility is a special way of individualizing the client.

B) PRINCIPLE OF PURPOSEFUL EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS

Emotions are an integral part of an individual's nature and their healthy development is necessary for the development of the total personality of a person. In the modern helping professions, the importance of a well ordered emotional life has been eminently recognized. Both psychology and psychiatry have studied the normal, healthy role of emotions in the personality structure. These disciplines have given social work, a body of knowledge about human growth and development which has made the helping process of social work eminently more effective.

The basic psychological needs of human beings have been identified as the need for affection, security, status, expression, achievement and independence. The degree of these needs varies from person to person. The need for expression and for sharing of experience has been singled out by social work as a pertinent dynamic in casework relationship. Purposeful expression of feelings according to Biestek

is the “recognition of the client’s need to express the negative feelings. The caseworker listens purposefully neither discouraging nor condemning the expression of these feelings, sometimes even actively stimulating and encouraging them when they are therapeutically useful as a part of the casework service”. The client’s expression of feelings should have a valid purpose in the casework process.

Purposes of the Purposeful Expression of feelings are as follows:

- *Relieving pressure:* Giving vent to one’s feelings, talking about the problem aids in catharsis which in turn enables an individual to see his/her own problem more clearly and objectively. This enables the client for positive and constructive action. For example a client who has just witnessed the death of a spouse needs sympathetic listening before he/she is ready to take interest in alternative strategies of living life.
- *Assessment of problem:* The expression of feelings helps the caseworker to understand the problem of the client more accurately and evaluate strengths and limitations of the client. This gives a way forward to making assessment objectively.
- *Psychological support:* Listening to a person while he/she talks about the problem in life provides immense psychological support to the client. The client feels understood and relieved from the burden of the problem.
- *Working towards negative feelings:* At times, negative feelings of the clients serve as the source of origin of problems. Sharing these feelings helps to bring them into the forefront of attention so that they may be resolved.
- *Strengthening casework relationship:* Talking about the problems, sharing feelings strengthens the casework relationship. Encouraging the client to express his/her feelings helps in deepening the bond between the worker and client. This also brings comfort, warmth and trust in the caseworker client relationship.

The client’s expression of feelings in the casework process also has certain limitations. **The limitations of the Purposeful expression of feelings are as follows:**

- *Agency constraints:* Functions of an agency may limit the expression of feelings to those which can be treated within the agency. The case worker is expected to work within the boundaries of the agency. For example if a client comes to an agency and expects monetary help whereas the agency is a hospital setting meant for providing treatment facilities to its clients. The case worker can only do referral services although he/she is appreciative of the need of his/her client.
- *Workload:* Workload with the caseworker determines the amount of time a caseworker can devote to each case. For example, if a caseworker is handling fifty cases apart from regular agency work, he/she may not have enough time to encourage expression of deeper feelings which require more time in each interview.
- *Premature expression of deep feelings:* Caseworker needs to be cautious in the early interviews about client’s premature expression of deeper feelings. For example, talking about intimate details of having undergone through a

rape by a victim in the very first meeting may not be desirable. This may inculcate feelings of guilt and hamper the casework relationship. Caseworker has to structure the entire casework process and slowly work towards building a relationship based on trust rather than allowing ventilation of deeper feeling at a premature stage.

- *Client Engagement:* Clients may have the tendency to put the total burden of conflict resolution on the caseworker. This is more common in the Indian situation where people have the tendency to talk about their problem and look up to the helper for 'readymade quick fix recipes' for problem resolution. Caseworker must ensure engagement of the client in the helping process right from the beginning to avoid undue dependence on the worker.

Demonstration of Principle of Purposeful Expression of Feelings

An essential function of the caseworker is to create a permissive environment that would encourage the client to freely express his/her feelings. This includes gaining trust and confidence of the client. Most clients talk at a superficial level and do not disclose their inner feelings till they are sure of the worker's accepting and permissive attitude towards client as an individual. Secondly, the caseworker's real desire to help and feeling *with* the client has to be communicated to the client at the 'feeling' level. Creation of a permissive environment is essential for purposeful expression of feelings. This may be done in the following ways:

- *Relaxed attitude:* Caseworker should be in a relaxed frame of mind, free from any preoccupations so that full attention may be devoted to the client. Ensuring privacy during interviews, having comfortable furniture in the room are some of the important steps to make the client feel comfortable and open up.
- *Preparation:* Prior to the interview, the caseworker must go through the earlier work done through the case records. This would refresh the memory and prepare the worker in planning and structuring the upcoming interview.
- *Listening:* Client's purposeful expression of feelings depends upon the quality of attention that is given by the caseworker. This enables the client to feel caseworker's genuine interest, sincerity, understanding and makes him/her to open up and express emotions. By asking appropriate questions, making empathic comments, nodding and showing interest through facial expressions, caseworker can demonstrate active listening to the client.
- *Encouragement:* The client has to be encouraged to talk and express feelings. Thus, by asking non threatening questions, repeating important phrases or words being said by client, making comments, expressing empathy; worker can motivate the client to talk freely. Statements like 'I realize how difficult this must be for you. What happened thereafter?' 'How did you *feel* when this happened?' are open ended statements/questions that require elaborate expression of feelings by the client.
- *Pace of progress:* A sensitive awareness of the client's pace of movement in each interview towards his/her casework goals is very necessary. Client's motivation to work towards resolving the problem would reflect upon the need and desire to express feelings at any given time.

- *Being Realistic*: Caseworker should refrain from giving any unrealistic reassurances, interpreting too early or too much in the expression of feelings by the client. Caseworker must not over estimate or under estimate client's capacity to tolerate anxiety. Caseworker must allow the client to talk, express feelings and feel relieved.

The principle of Purposeful expression of feelings aids in study and diagnosis in casework. Purposeful expression of feelings helps the caseworker to gain invaluable material for study and gain a realistic understanding of the client and his/her progress in totality. This helps in seeing the problem clearly and working towards its resolution. By their expression the feelings are brought out in the open for discussion and increase the client's participation and involvement to help himself/herself.

C) PRINCIPLE OF CONTROLLED EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

Communication is a two way process between the communicator and the receiver with the flow of information. The content of communication comprises of the following:

- Ideas only
- Feelings only
- Ideas and feelings

When a woman seeks information at the railway reservation counter, she is only seeking information and expecting a factual response. On the other hand, when a teenage girl who had been raped discovers her pregnancy shares with her friend, *I do not know how I will face the world*, she is communicating her feelings. In such case only her feeling response would be appropriate.

In casework interviews, the content of communication is most often a combination of *thought* and *feeling* (Biestek: 1957). The nature of content depends upon – problem of the client, function of the agency, needs and feelings of the client in particular interviews, changing moods of the client within an interview and the purposes of the caseworker in the ongoing processes of study, diagnosis and treatment.

The social caseworker needs the skill to communicate at both the *thought* and *feeling* levels. Caseworker has to gain factual information and at the same time study client's ideas, thoughts and feelings. The element of controlled emotional involvement in a casework relationship according to Biestek, is the caseworker's sensitivity to client's feelings and understanding of their meaning and a purposeful, appropriate response to the client's feelings. There are three components in demonstration of controlled emotional involvement:

- a) Sensitivity
 - b) Understanding
 - c) Response
- a) **Sensitivity**: Sensitivity means seeing and listening to the feelings of the client carefully. Many times, clients are unable to express their feelings verbally or are ready to divulge personal details. With the knowledge of human behaviour,

observation and analytical skills, the caseworker has to observe the minutest of the details and draw an understanding by putting them in proper perspective. Body language or the non verbal communication can be effectively used as clues and indices to identify and interpret client's feelings. For example, use of hands, arms and legs, pace, tone of speech, posture, eye contact, silence, repetitive body actions are important indicators of client's non verbalized feelings.

- b) Understanding:** As a professional helping person, the caseworker needs to understand the meaning of the client's feelings in relation to the client's problem. The worker's own life experiences and professional practice help in introspection and analysis of the professional situations. This includes knowledge of common human needs, patterns of human reactions and defenses in times of stress. This general knowledge is then used as a framework within which this particular client, with his/her individual and unique qualities, can be better understood and helped
- c) Response:** Sensitivity and understanding are insufficient in themselves; they are means to the response. The caseworker's response to the client on the *feeling* level is the most important psychological element in the casework relationship and is perhaps the most difficult to the casework skills. The response is not necessarily verbal. Essentially it is a response of attitude and feeling, guided by knowledge and purpose. It is primarily an internal response where the caseworker consciously and purposefully identifies with the feelings of the client. It is a sharing of a warmly human professional person with fine sensitivities of another human being who needs help (Biestek: 1957)

The response of the worker should reflect the skill to probe in order to gather factual as well as feeling information from the client, while verbalizing understanding. It should convey warmth and empathy to the client.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) What are the prerequisites for the application of the principle of individualization?

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- 2) How does a caseworker demonstrate the Principle of Purposeful Expression of Feelings to the client?

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D) PRINCIPLE OF ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance is one of the commonly used term in social work profession. It is an important value in social work is that guides social workers to accept people as they are, with their strengths and limitations, potentialities and weaknesses, positive and negative feelings. In social work, acceptance is related with 'quality of life, professional attitude, the central dynamic and a principle'. According to Biestek (1957), action of acceptance is indicated as therapeutic understanding, respecting, loving, perceiving, acknowledging, helping and receiving. The three steps in the action of acceptance are as follows:

- Perceiving
- Therapeutic understanding
- Acknowledging

The caseworker must first objectively see what he/she is accepting. The worker must see the object of acceptance in relation to the causes which brought about the object in relation to what it means to the person, and in relation to the purpose of the casework process in each individual case. The caseworker must acknowledge this as a pertinent reality. The qualities of acceptance are warmth, courtesy, listening, respect, concern, consistent maturity, firmness and willingness to consciously enter and share in the life experiences of another (Biestek :1957). The purpose of acceptance in casework is different from other interpersonal relationships e.g. with spouse, siblings, friends etc. Acceptance in casework process is therapeutic in nature as it aims at helping the client to deal with problems and needs after perceiving his problem from his perspective and then acknowledging it.

Distinction between Acceptance and Approval

An important standpoint in casework is the distinction between acceptance and approval. Acceptance does not mean concurrence with or approval of client's behaviour. To illustrate, let us take an example of a man who has committed a murder and now seeking help from a caseworker. In this case, following the principle of acceptance would not imply that the worker's approval of the crime committed by the client. The worker would objectively study the client and assess the probable reasons that led the man to commit such a crime. Caseworker would accept the client as an individual possessing all his dignity and worth as an individual. However, the worker would disapprove of the murder committed by the client. The worker would not verbally praise or condemn the act and show empathic interest in getting to know the client and his life situations better. By acceptance one does not mean that the worker becomes partial in the face of the deviant behaviour that has added on to misery and deviance in society. It may be remembered that the client would not really be helped if his/her anti social behaviour (murder in this case) is apparently appreciated by the worker. The objective of acceptance is not the *good* but the *real*. Its objective as mentioned earlier is therapeutic i.e. to aid the worker to understand the client better and making the helping process more effective. The purpose is to free the client from using defense mechanisms and enabling him/her see the reality and realistically deal with the problem. Thus, principle of acceptance as defined by Biestek (1957) is as follows:

“Principle of acceptance is a principle where the caseworker perceives and deals with the client as he/she really is, including strengths and weaknesses, congenial

and uncongenial qualities, positive and negative feelings, constructive and deconstructive attitudes and behaviour, maintaining all the while a sense of the client's innate dignity and personal worth".

Understanding the client better

Let us try to understand the client's perspective. The client comes to the agency with some problem or maladjustment which he/she has been unable to cope with. Thus on one side, there is a sense of failure to resolve one's problem and having to seek outside help. At the same time, there is also a sense of own pride and dignity which make the client feel ambivalent. The strength of the desire to change and readiness to effect change is varying in each individual. This ambivalence extends to the caseworker as the client realizes that some weaknesses have to be shared since he/she is seeking outside support. This makes the client fear disapproval from the worker and feel insecure. To deal with this insecurity, the client makes use of defense mechanisms that help the client to hide the anxieties and inner feelings from one's self and from the worker.

In such a situation, by making the client feel accepted, showing interest and genuine concern, the worker helps the client in reducing the anxiety and lowering the defense mechanisms. The principle of acceptance aids the casework process as the client begins to express feelings and open up to the caseworker. However, the client constantly checks the reactions of the worker to his/her disclosure of feelings especially negative feelings.

Demonstration of Principle of Acceptance

- Giving the client focussed response, directed to the needs of the client rather than worker's own needs;
- Realizing client's potential for self help and exercising professional responsibility for the promotion of the growth of the client;
- Giving responses that contain the elements of both *thoughts* and *feelings*; and
- Providing agency specific help to the client.

Limitations of Principle of Acceptance

- Inadequate knowledge of human behaviour;
- Counter transference;
- Caseworker being judgemental about the client's situation;
- Caseworker's personal biases and prejudices;
- Unrealistic assurances by the worker;
- Confusion between acceptance and approval;
- Lack of respect for the client.

E) PRINCIPLE OF NON JUDGEMENTAL ATTITUDE

One of the most talked about principles of casework that is also a difficult one to practice is the Principle of non judgemental attitude. According to Biestek (1957), Principle of non judgemental attitude is defined as "Quality for casework relationship, it is based on a conviction that the casework function excludes

assigning guilt or innocence or degree of client responsibility for causations of the problem or needs, but does include making evaluating judgements about the attitudes, standards or actions of the client: the attitude which involves both thought and feeling elements, is transmitted to the client”.

Casework is a helping process where judgment would imply blaming the client and making him/her responsible for causing problems in his/her life. Let us take an example of a woman who has approached a child guidance clinic to seek help for her daughter who is showing symptoms of depression. Being judgemental in this case would imply blaming the mother for her daughter's condition. Similarly, passing a judgment on a HIV positive person would mean blaming the client for his/her physical condition and for contracting HIV. As mentioned earlier, wholistic understanding of the client and his/her life situations is necessary in the casework relationship. However, this does not give the caseworker an authority to make judgements about the clients.

Understanding Client's perspective

Seeking outside support for conflict resolution is not an easy task. The necessity to seek help from an agency can in itself produce a host of painful feelings. One of these feelings is the fear of being judged. In the initial interviews, the client looks at the caseworker as one of the members of the larger society which is often judgmental with fixed standards of Do's and Don'ts. The client fears of being labeled by the caseworker, keeping in mind the preset standards of right and wrong. As a result of these feelings, the client adapts by using defense mechanisms and is hesitant to express inner thoughts and feelings. In such a scenario, demonstration of a non judgemental attitude helps the client 'feel' assured of the caseworker's disinterest in making any kind of judgement, in praising or condemning the client. As the relationship gradually strengthens, the client grows in faith in the worker and begins to discuss needs and problems, develops objective analysis necessary for constructive change.

Evaluation of Attitudes, Standards and Actions of client

There is a clear cut difference between being non judgmental towards the client and judging client's *behaviour* which may be moral/ immoral. While the caseworker refrains from judging the guilt or innocence of the client; he/she objectively evaluates the attitudes, standards and actions of the client. In order to understand this, let us take the case of a woman who is in a live-in relationship and seeking help to deal with problems with her lover. While dealing with such a case, the worker has no right to give the client a moral lecture on the grounds of her live in relationship, which is still not readily accepted in large parts of India. However, the worker has to probe into her life situation and make inquiries in order to make evaluations of her behaviour. The purpose in this case would be to understand the client and this would aid in the treatment process.

There are strong and valid reasons for practicing a non judgmental attitude. The worker being a social worker is a member of the larger society and his/her function is to help the client (and not condemn) within the law and basic values of society. If the caseworker is oblivious towards delinquent and immoral behaviour/attitude of the client, the client would not feel understood and may underrate the worker's ability to provide professional help. Moreover, the caseworker has every right to

have his/her own social, moral and spiritual values. The worker must, however, ensure that his/her personal values, beliefs, opinions and code of ethics are not imposed on the client in any way. The worker has no right to judge the client by personal standards.

Demonstration of Principle of Non Judgemental Attitude

- Encouraging the client to open up and express own thoughts and feelings
- Being respectful and attentive to the client throughout the casework relationship
- Being aware of personal biases and prejudices and not letting them influence the casework relationship. E.g. the worker might have been socialized to develop a dislike for certain castes/castes/categories like alcoholics, differently abled, sex workers, scheduled castes/tribes etc. While in a casework relationship with such clients, worker must ensure not to let personal dislike interfere in the helping process. The worker must recognize and control personal biases and develop capacity to see people objectively and not subjectively.
- Treat the client as a unique person. Worker should refrain from making references to people who have faced similar problems
- Understanding negative feelings of the client towards the worker should be related with the use of defense mechanisms.

Check Your Progress IV

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

1) How does a caseworker demonstrate the Principle of Non Judgemental Attitude?

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2) What are the limitations of Principle of Acceptance?

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F) PRINCIPLE OF SELF DETERMINATION

One of the firmest convictions of social work profession is that a person has an innate ability for self determination. A conscious willful violation of the client's freedom by a caseworker is considered unprofessional as it transgresses the client's natural right and impairs the casework treatment. The principle of self determination is defined by Biestek (1957) as follows:

“The principle of self determination is the practical recognition of the right and need of clients to freedom in making their own choices and decisions in the casework process. Caseworkers have a corresponding duty to respect that right, recognize

that need, stimulate and help to activate that potential for self direction by helping the client to see and use the available and appropriate resources of the community and of his/her own personality. The client's right to self determination is however, limited by the client's capacity for positive and constructive decision making, by the framework of civil and moral law, and by the function of the agency".

Client as a human being has the responsibility of living his/her life in such a manner that he/she is able to work towards achieving life's goals. The client also has the right to decide the course of action to achieve. However, the client seeks professional help from social caseworker to know the various alternatives and objectively evaluate each alternative. Following are the ways by which principle of self determination can be demonstrated:

- a) *Communicating the problem*: The caseworker's acceptance of the client and the diagnosis after the study phase has to be communicated to the client. The caseworker has to enable the client work through the emotional disturbance and clearly see the problem
- b) *Enabling identification of resources*: Caseworker must help the client identify available resources that may be used for problem resolution. Caseworker and the client work together to carry out cost benefit analysis of the alternatives available to the client. The role of the worker is to delicately balance activity as well as passivity. The passivity consists of doing things for and to the client, thus helping the client to express fully and freely. The caseworker is however active in observing and evaluating the words, actions and emotions of the client, analyzing client's strengths as well as limitations, enriching outer and inner resources of the client and stimulating the client towards his/her activity (Biestek).
- c) *Activating client's resources*: Worker has to help the client to get free from stress, fears and provide support to grow through the worker client relationship. The ultimate goal is to capacitate the client to be self reliant.
- d) *Facilitative relationship environment*: Caseworker has to create a relationship environment in order to enable the client grow and work out the problems. With active listening, the caseworker facilitates client participation in deeper realization of own problems, identify resources to work out own problems.

In application of the principle of Self Determination, the caseworker however must not assume the principle responsibility for problem resolution for the client. The client must be helped to take an active role while caseworker's role is more of a facilitator and supporter. Caseworker should not in any way manipulate or persuade the client in choosing the course of action or in decision making.

Limitations of Principle of Self Determination

- *Client's capacity for positive and constructive decision making*: Each client's physical and mental capacity to take personal decisions varies. For example, a mentally retarded child would not be able to take decisions related to career/vocational activity to be taken up. Similarly, persons suffering from mental illnesses (schizophrenia, cases of acute depression or those having suicidal or homicidal tendencies) may not be emotionally stable to take objective independent decisions. In such cases, the caseworker would have to assume a lead role in order to protect the client from taking inappropriate decisions.

- *Limitations related to civil law:* Authority and law are realities of an organized society. The general purpose of law is to prevent individuals from abusing or misusing liberty and to protect the society from such an abuse. While Principle of self determination encourages the client to take his/her own decisions, caseworker has to help the client accept and adjust to the limitations of personal freedom arising from law and authority.
- *Limitation related to moral law:* The natural right to make choices and decisions about one's own life does not extend to moral evil; a person might have the physical power to make such a choice but he/she has no real right to do so (Biestek: 1957). Commonly accepted moral laws may relate to inappropriate behaviours such as stealing, kidnapping, murder etc. In India, the moral laws widen due to the existence of multiple religions where each religion prescribes its own moral behaviour- food habits, marriage, divorce, adoption etc. The caseworker has to accept the conscience of the client and help the client make choices and decisions that are within the boundaries of that conscience.
- *Limitation related to agency function:* Each agency has its own ethos, goals, functions, eligibility criteria, networks and areas of concern/action. The client has a duty to respect this and is obliged to remain within the framework of the agency function.

G) PRINCIPLE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality in social work can be considered from two standpoints- as an item in the professional code of ethics and as an element of the casework relationship. The principle of confidentiality is very complex and difficult to apply to concrete casework situations. Biestek (1957) has given its following definition of the principle of confidentiality:

“Confidentiality is the preservation of secret information concerning the client which is disclosed in the professional relationship. Confidentiality is based upon a basic right of the client; it is an ethical obligation of the caseworker and is necessary for effective casework service. The client's right however, is not absolute. Moreover, the client's secret is often shared with other professional persons within the agency; the obligation then binds all equally”.

Client when approaches an agency with a problem is aware of the necessity to verbalize and reveal pertinent facts, inner feelings and fears about his/her life to the caseworker. Without expressing these, the client can not expect help in conflict resolution. This information may be very personal, might be related with immoral or socially undesirable behaviour of the client and may hamper 'social image' of the client, if disclosed to people. Therefore, there is a need to practice the principle of confidentiality by the caseworker.

Ethical obligations of caseworker

Confidential information can be defined as a fact or a condition, or the knowledge thereof pertaining to a person's private life which is normally hidden from the eyes of others. Biestek (1957) has given three classes of confidential information:

- a) The Natural Secret
- b) The Promised Secret
- c) The Entrusted Secret

- a) The *Natural* secret is the information which, if revealed would defame, injure or unjustly sadden the person. E.g. information related to having undergone through sexual abuse, incest, having marital discord, premarital/ extra marital relationships, failure in examination etc. The obligation to preserve natural secrets binds everyone, regardless of the nature of the relationship.
- b) The *Promised* secret is one in which the confidant gives an assurance, a promise, after she/he has learnt the secret information that caseworker would not divulge it. The subject matter may include the defamatory facts about the client's personal life which he/she does not want to be revealed.
- c) The *Entrusted* secret is information which is communicated to a confidant with the previous explicit or implicit understanding that the matter will not be revealed. The subject matter may or may not include a natural secret.

In casework relationship confidentiality includes all three types of secrets. There is always a presumption that the caseworker would be ethically bound to keep the confidence of the client. However, since the caseworker works within an agency set up, the personal information shared by the client does not confine to the individual worker but remains within the agency. The agency would not be able to provide services unless the information is shared by the caseworker with colleagues/teammates. The information also gets recorded in the case files of the client. However, all the persons in the agency are bound to guard the confidentiality of the client.

Limitations of Principle of Confidentiality

- *Conflict within the client:* An apparent conflict may exist between the client's right to preserve own secret and another of his/her rights and duties. The solution of this conflict requires evaluation of the rights without any exaggeration. The presumption should always be that the right to confidentiality remains dormant until clear evidence to the contrary appears.
- *Conflict with the rights of another individual:* At times, preservation of the client's secret may harm the rights of an innocent person. e.g. client may confess about motives to kidnap someone. In this case, if the caseworker decides to stick to the principle of confidentiality, it would mean putting an innocent person's life in danger and causing unnecessary misery. Caseworker thus has to evaluate objectively and take a decision.
- *Conflict with the rights of the social worker:* Occasionally by keeping the client's secret, the worker may forfeit own personal rights, which may be more important than the client. The worker can not be expected to surrender own rights in the performance of professional duty.
- *Conflict with the rights of the social agency:* Every agency has got its own set of goals, programmes, target groups and services. Incase an extreme situation arises where by keeping the client's secret, a right of the agency would be violated and the agency would be forced to operate contrary to its function; the agency would not be bound to preserve client's secret.
- *Conflict with the rights of the society as a whole:* Each person has the right to maintain peace, harmony, promoting common good and welfare of people. The general principle is that the obligation of the entrusted secret ceases when the preservation of the secret would constitute a real and serious damage to the common good.

Check Your Progress V

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

1) Define the principle of right to self determination?

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2) Bring out the limitations of Principle of Confidentiality.

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1.7 LET US SUM UP

The relationship between the caseworker and the client is of utmost importance.

The caseworker and the client are fundamentally equal as human beings. In a casework relationship however, caseworker takes on the role of a professional helper while client is the person who needs help. Caseworker client relationship also differs from other professional relationships such as doctor-patient, psychiatrist-client.

Casework relationship goes much beyond merely a friendly relationship between the caseworker and the client. Clients bring into the casework relationship their feelings, attitudes and behaviour which they have experienced with others. By exhibiting an open, 'warm' attitude, caseworker is able to convey to the client his/her openness and concern to understand the client's problem, client's attitudes and sharing of experiences. Through empathy, caseworker is able to convey to the client his/her understanding of client's problem with accuracy and 'oneness'.

By feeling caseworker's empathy, the client feels understood and important. Authority is an essential element of caseworker client relationship. The degree of emotional satisfaction which the client gets from such a relationship is far beyond the realistic limits of the caseworker-client relationship.

There are seven principles of the casework relationship:

- Principle of Individualization
- Principle of Purposeful expression of feelings
- Principle of Controlled emotional involvement
- Principle of Acceptance
- Principle of Non Judgmental attitude

- Principle of Client's right to Self Determination
- Principle of Confidentiality

Principles of casework are principles of action, based upon a fundamental which influences, guides and directs. The principles are also referred to as qualities or elements as they are present in every good casework relationship and are the constitutive parts of the relationship (Biestek). Every principle has certain pre-requisites and can be demonstrated by the caseworker so as to reach the desired goal of problem solving.

1.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 2 SUPPORTIVE TECHNIQUES OF HELPING

Contents

**Archana Dassi*

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Acceptance
- 2.3 Assurance
- 2.4 Facilitation of Expression of Feelings
- 2.5 Allying Feelings that are Overpowering
- 2.6 Accrediting and Building of Self-confidence
- 2.7 Encouragement and Reassurance
- 2.8 Being with the client
- 2.9 Advocacy
- 2.10 Providing and Procuring Material Help
- 2.11 Enhancing Information and Knowledge
- 2.12 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.13 Further Readings and References

2.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit you shall be introduced to the various casework techniques to help a client. By the end of this unit, you should be able to understand some of the techniques such as acceptance, assurance, facilitation of expression of feelings, allying feelings that are overpowering, accrediting and building of self-confidence, encouragement and reassurance, being with the client, advocacy, providing and procuring material help and enhancing information and knowledge.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of casework is to help people to handle their problems of social functioning effectively. The helping process is to be carried out in such a way that the philosophical values as well as the principles are adhered to. The two major goals of casework service are: (1) rendering help to cope with the problem which the client can not handle unaided and (2) enhancing the operation of client's ego functions whereby s/he moves towards greater ability in handling his / her life and problems. Casework techniques are the procedures of helping the client. They are the wherewithal through which the client gets the experience of being helped. The client may not perceive the procedures but s/he will generally experience the fact of being helped. There are a number of supportive techniques used by the caseworker to facilitate the process of helping. These supportive techniques are as follows:

2.2 ACCEPTANCE

It is one of the basic techniques of helping. The abstract principle of acceptance is made into a reality through the technique of acceptance. It is an ongoing disposition through which the client feels that s/he is welcome to the social work agency and the caseworker is truly interested in him / her. Acceptance by the social caseworker is conveyed through words, the tone of the words and the overall behaviour which is visible to the client. Further it is characterized by the worker's warmth and courtesy to the client, his / her demonstration of interest in the client, his / her geniality and cordiality. The way the client is received, given a seat and listened to, is important in creating an atmosphere of acceptance. Acceptance is more experiential than describable as a concept.

The caseworker's first contact with the client has to be particularly utilized by the worker for conveying his / her message of acceptance. But the practice of acceptance has to continue as long as the individual is a client of the agency, with the underlying stipulation that, when and where acceptance does not come automatically it has to be used deliberately and consciously. Acceptance of certain types of clients is easier as they evoke our sympathies because of being victimized by difficulties for which they are not responsible. On the other hand, there are clients who are the perpetrators and have brought misery to their as well as in other's life. Such people evoke no sympathy from others. Visible acceptance of 'unlovable' persons are all the more important because one needs to understand what led them to this end. Hence the acceptance on the part of the caseworker becomes more important.

Factors facilitating acceptance: it is seen that acceptance does not come naturally; it has to be consciously used. There are few factors which facilitate acceptance.

Firstly, if one's practice is embedded into the philosophical values of social work, it can facilitate the path of acceptance.

Secondly, knowledge about the human behaviour and the influence of socio-cultural factors on the behaviour of individual is very useful for the caseworker. Internalization of such knowledge helps a person to be mentally prepared to accept different types of people without getting shocked by their behaviour.

Thirdly, self awareness of the social caseworker. There is a need to be aware of one's own mental processes, biases and prejudices and feelings. There are three steps for knowing one's self. The first step is to be aware of one's own unfavourable feelings that obstruct acceptance. Secondly, these feelings have to be examined in the background of one's experience and built-in-biases. The third step is to superimpose on the negative feelings, elements of acceptance. The pre-requisite for the development of self-awareness is the social worker's recognition of the importance of the art of reflection.

2.3 ASSURANCE

In certain contexts, the client needs assurance regarding the authenticity of his / her feelings and that s/he will not be evaluated or ostracized for her / his feelings. The client has to be helped to understand the difference between feeling and doing. For example, one may feel very angry with a person but may not do anything to harm that person. Feelings of any kind are neither wrong nor blameworthy, but certain acts carried out under the force of feelings can be unlawful and wrong

because of the harm it causes to others. The common observation is that after making an angry statement the client feels embarrassed and guilty. This is the time when the social worker needs to accept his feelings and empathize with him. This assures a client that s/he is not being judged by the worker. The assurance could be conveyed by responses such as *'I can understand your feelings of anger or it is human and natural to have these feelings in such circumstances'*.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

1) What are the two major goals of casework service?

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2) What are the factors facilitating acceptance?

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2.4 FACILITATION OF EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS

Since expression of feelings by the client is necessary, the facilitation of expression of feelings is an important supportive technique for the social case worker. Strong feelings when bottled up can create blocks in thinking and thus paralyze one's ego apparatus that has the problem solving abilities. Feelings like anger, guilt, sorrow, despair, and such other emotions drain one's mental energy and leave very little for problem solving. Hence it is necessary for the client who is carrying a load of emotional material to unburden himself / herself. The social caseworker by careful listening, by asking appropriate questions and by refraining from making judgemental statements, facilitates expression of feelings by the client. The social caseworker acts as a prompter and an enabler. Since every situation is emotionally charged to some extent, the degree might vary from case to case; the emotional elements should be attended to, before the client can be fully involved in handling his problem.

2.5 ALLYING FEELINGS THAT ARE OVERPOWERING

Stressful events can provoke feeling in an individual which affect his / her capacity for thinking and acting appropriately. When the mind is filled with disturbing emotions, the individual tends to withdraw into himself / herself and brood over the matter causing stress. Brooding causes the stress to expand and occupy the full space on the mental screen, shutting out possibilities of rational thinking. Social worker intervention is able to arrest the client's mental processes of withdrawing and brooding by helping the person to verbalize, to perceive the situation

realistically, and by opening to his view, avenues for new thinking. The conversation is directed in such a manner that the strength and extent of feelings is reduced and the stress causing situation is projected in its true size for the client's viewing and handling.

2.6 ACCREDITING AND BUILDING OF SELF-CONFIDENCE

For the client to be active participant in the problem solving process, s/he needs to develop self-confidence. Recognizing the client's strengths and giving him / her due credit for the tasks s/he has been able to perform successfully, is helpful in building the self-confidence. The social worker need to commend the client for the accomplishments resulting into self confidence.

2.7 ENCOURAGEMENT AND REASSURANCE

Encouragement and reassurance need to be used to clients advantage in casework. It is a common experience of social workers that clients are generally reluctant to do unfamiliar things without strong encouragement, albeit doing such things is necessary to improve the situation. While using encouragement and reassurance, the social worker has to ensure that the situations are suitable for the exercise of such techniques. Encouraging a client to do things for which s/he does not have the ability, or reassuring a client about the success of an activity s/he is going to undertake which does not warrant certainty of success, is undesirable. To illustrate, for a patient awaiting a surgical operation, the social worker can not give any reassurance regarding the success of the operation unless success is warranted by the surgeon.

2.8 BEING WITH THE CLIENT

When a client lacks self-confidence or is weighed down with excessive anxiety regarding carrying out a necessary action, the social worker's presence will serve as a support. Therefore, providing one's nearness appropriately with discretion, according to the need of the situation makes it a technique, distinct from a mere gesture of friendliness.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

1) How does a social worker facilitate the client in expressing his / her feelings?

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2) How does a Caseworker build self confidence in client?

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2.9 ADVOCACY

Social workers do not use coercion or threats for changing client's behaviour. Nevertheless, the social worker does have the authority emanating from his /her own knowledge and skills, from the declared functions of the agency and from the society in general in terms of its sanction. Though it is in the form of unwritten authority, it has certain by-products that are advantageous. One by-product is the respect that is given to the social worker and the profession. There are people among the public who acknowledge the personalized service content of the social work and give credence to the reports and requests of social workers. There are times when social workers find it necessary to use advocacy. Advocacy involves making a request to a third person in support and on behalf of the client.

2.10 PROVIDING AND PROCURING MATERIAL HELP

Apart from support provided through various techniques, some clients will need material help, that is, in the form of money or materials. Some agencies have the provision for material help in a small way but some organisations do not have that provision. In that case, money or material for the client has to be procured from charitable trusts, organisations, individual donors and well wishers. Sometimes the need of the client is varied and hence one has to marshal help from various quarters for the benefit of the client. This is termed as *resource pooling*, for which some spade work needs to be done by the social worker by way of exploration of potential resource persons and services and of interpreting client's need to them. Bank loans are also obtained for some clients. Also, help was solicited for some cases from sponsorship organisations who agreed to help some of the needy children and adolescents.

2.11 ENHANCING INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

Among the resources required for human functioning is the non-material resource of information and knowledge, the lack of which can create problems or aggravate the problems that are already present. Sometimes, lack of information may further be confounded by the presence of misinformation or superstition. For example, there are many wrong notions about certain ailments — there is a belief that epilepsy is caused by possession of devils. Although it is well known that epilepsy is caused by defective functioning of a part of the brain. Therefore, enhancing the knowledge resource of clients becomes a necessary technique in casework.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) How does a caseworker support in providing or procuring material help to the client?

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2.12 LET US SUM UP

The purpose of casework is to help people to handle their problems of social functioning effectively. Casework techniques are the procedures of helping the client. They are the wherewithal through which the client gets the experience of being helped. Acceptance is one of the basic techniques of helping. Acceptance by the social caseworker is conveyed through words, the tone of the voice and the overall behaviour which is visible to the client. Further it is characterized by the worker's warmth and courtesy to the client, his / her demonstration of interest in the client, his / her geniality and cordiality. The caseworker's first contact with the client has to be particularly utilized by the worker for conveying his / her message of acceptance. There are a few factors which facilitate acceptance.

Since expression of feelings by the client is necessary, the facilitation of expression of feelings is an important supportive technique for the social case worker. The social caseworker by careful listening, by asking appropriate questions and by refraining from judgemental statements, facilitates expression of feelings by the client. For the client to be active participant in the problem solving process, s/he needs to develop self-confidence. The social worker needs to commend the client for the accomplishments resulting into self confidence.

When a client is in problem, s/he lacks self-confidence or is weighed down with excessive anxiety regarding carrying out a necessary action, the social worker's presence will serve as a support. Social workers do not use coercion or threats for changing client's behaviour. There are times when social workers find it necessary to use advocacy. Apart from support provided through various techniques, some clients will need material help, that is, in the form of money or materials. Sometimes the need of the client is varied and hence one has to marshal help from various quarters for the benefit of the client. Bank loans are also obtained for some clients. In the present chapter, some of the basic techniques have been described, that are helping procedures aimed at providing psychological support for the client and at improving the client's material and non-material resources.

It is evident that new knowledge is needed to produce new forms of behaviour. But intellectual knowledge alone is not sufficient; along with it there should be emotional readiness to change. In the present chapter, some of the basic techniques have been described, that are helping procedures aimed at providing psychological support for the client and at improving the client's material and non-material resources. It is obvious that communication is the base for all the techniques.

2.13 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 3 SOCIAL CASE WORK PROCESS

Contents

**Archana Dassi*

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Phases of Social Casework Process
- 3.3 Social Investigation (Study)
- 3.4 Social Diagnosis (Assessment)
- 3.5 Intervention (Treatment)
- 3.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.7 Further Readings and References

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the different phases social case work process and the relationship among them;
- The application of social study, assessment, intervention, termination and evaluation process in social case work practice;
- Understand the meaning and dimensions of problems and visualize the individual needs and the problem of individuals and families;
- Development of knowledge that a social worker must understand while providing service to a client; and
- Understand the process of social casework and relate to the role of a social worker in social casework process.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Social case work is the method of social work which focuses both on the person and his/her environment and helps to improve the balance between the person's coping efforts and the environmental demands. It is a method in which help is provided by social case worker to the individuals to cope more effectively with their problems in social functioning. Sometimes due to certain factors internal or external, individuals are not able to solve their problems or fail to avail existing resources, in such a situation social case worker by using various methods, techniques and skills of social case work practice tries to help the client in solving his/her psycho-social problems.

3.2 PHASES OF SOCIAL CASE WORK PROCESS

According Mary Richmond (1917) there are three phases of social case work practice: social investigation or psycho-social study, diagnosis and treatment or management. In contemporary social case work practice these three phases have been divided into five divisions namely

- social investigation or study,
- assessment,
- intervention,
- termination and
- evaluation.

Social Investigation or study is a systematic study of the client and his/her circumstances in context to his/ her problem. In Social study, according to Mary Richmond, the case worker must secure all facts through logical and inferential reasoning, as it would reveal the client's personality and the situation for appropriate intervention (treatment). **Assessment** is an attempt to arrive at an exact situation, as far as possible, of the social situation and personality of a given client. It is a search for the cause of the problem which brings the client to the worker for the help. It aims at finding answers to three major questions: What is the problem? How did it arise? What can be done to solve it? **Social case work intervention** is to alleviate the client's distress and restore, maintain or enhance social functioning of an individual who is in need of help. It is to enhance the client's comfort, satisfaction and self realization. This may require enhancing the adaptive skills of the ego and functioning of the person-situation system. **Termination** means ending the process that begun when client agreed to undergo social case work interventive process. The termination process is being decided by worker and client with each others consent. Termination is the stage when the worker has the confidence in the client's ability to cope with present and arising situations. **Evaluation** is the process in which one tries to find out effectiveness and success of the process. It is the activity which ascertains that whether social case work process has achieved the desired goals in a case. In social case work practice evaluation provides the crucial feedback to case worker and the client regarding whether the intervention programme is succeeding as desired

The phases of case work process are interlinked with each other. Fern Lowry (1936) described this process as similar in form to a rope at woven of multiple strands when one cuts the rope at any point, all the component strands are exposed. These phase are interwoven and performed in a sequence.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

- 1) Briefly discuss the different phases of social case work process?

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3.3 SOCIAL INVESTIGATION (STUDY)

Social investigation is a psycho social process. It is the initial phase in which the worker gains his first understanding of the kind of help his clients needs. He/she must learn what the client sees his problem as, what he/she thinks can be done

about it, what he himself/herself tried to do about it, and what are the reasons the client has identified for his present difficulty. It transcends much beyond assessment of an individual client or family. The intra psychic forces are inseparably linked with social forces. To understand the individual psycho-social entity, it is important to analyze the relationship of client with others. The worker continuously tries to arrive at his own understanding of what the client's problem is, which factors contributed to it causatively, and which assets in the client's situation can enable the client to improve his situation and help the worker facilitate this improvement through the case work intervention process.

The term social investigation is also used by some experts as social- evidence, seeking social inquiry, intake and orientation or beginning process. Social investigation is the foundation upon which the various helping processes, actions and intervention technique are built. For every social work activity, whether it is at individual level or family level or community and society level the social investigation is indispensable. Social investigations help to find out the social realities of the clients and their families, to identify the problem area and to formulate intervention, rehabilitation and aftercare strategies.

a) According to Perlman **elements of the social case work study in the beginning phase are:**

1. The nature of the presenting problem,
2. The significance of this problem,
3. The cause/s, onset and precipitants of the problem,
4. The efforts made to cope with problem solving,
5. The nature of the of the solution or ends sought from the case work agency,
6. The actual nature of this agency and its problem solving means in relation to the client and his problem.

b) **Method**

Perlman has suggested four methods for operating in the beginning phase:

1. Relating to the client
2. Helping the client to talk about his/her troubles
3. Focusing and partializing
4. Helping the client to engage with the agency.

Both content and method in the beginning phase assists all the processes.

c) **Tools and technique in case study process**

1. Interview
2. Objective Observation
3. Examination of records and documents
4. Collection of information from collateral sources
5. Collection of information from family members
6. Special examination or test

The process of social investigation is initiated and carried out through the process of interview. Professional skill in this area requires not only theoretical knowledge

about the psychology of human behaviour but also considerable case work practice in which the worker's technique is repeatedly analysed. The interview is used for securing the information about the client as well as his problems including his social relationships. Through the interview, the case worker attempts to instruct and guide both the clients and others who play significant role in his life and attempts to manipulate the environment for the benefit of the client.

Observation is always coupled with interviewing. It makes possible to correct behaviour of the client as it occurs. It yields clues to the pathological patterns of communication, pathogenic relation and defective role playing and polarization of power and authority among the family members who are of etiological significance.

d) Various aspects related to social case work study

It is very important to collect sufficient factual information regarding client so that the worker can understand the current situation and what needs to be done in future. How his/her problem started or what was the cause of beginning and increase of the problem. In the past how client has managed his problem and who are the concerned person related to the problem. It is important to study how environment is affecting the client or how he /she is affecting the environment. Clear and effective diagnosis can only be achieved when the worker studies the client and the family's socio-economic, psychological and cultural factors in context to their inter-personal relationships. In a nutshell the important aspects related to social case work study are:

1. Current problem and beginning of the problem (when, how and where problem started, intervention taken and current status i.e. management of the problem)
2. Facts related to client (birth, weaning, food habits, mobility, toilet training, measure experiences and incident, aggressiveness, fear, school progress, learning problems and responses. Traumatic experiences, accident, handicaps, family profile, cultural and economic status, important family relations, married life, means of recreations, interest and skills).

e) Skills of Social Case Worker

1. Skill in observation and analyzing situation
2. Skill of listening
3. Skill in talking
4. Skill in giving direction during interview
5. Skill in conducting interviews according various objectives

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

- 1) What do you mean by social investigation in social case work process and discuss its importance?

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2) What are the different kinds of tools and techniques used in social investigation during social case work process?

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3.4 SOCIAL DIAGNOSIS (ASSESSMENT)

It is the assessment phase of case work which gives realistic basis for differentiation – individualized knowledge about the person in their social context. Social diagnosis (assessment) is the attempt to arrive at an exact definition as far as possible of the social situation and personality of a given client. It is a search for the cause of the problem which brings the client to the worker for help. It is an effort to deduce from the material available, seen against the background of what the worker knows of human behaviour and social realities, what the client's problem is, what factors contribute in alleviating the problem, what changes can be brought to occur which will reduce or eradicate his/her problem and what steps the case worker can take to forward these objectives.

Hence, diagnosis is defined as:

1. an explanation formulated in the light of known facts (both tangible facts and psychological facts)
2. an explanation made in the knowledge of other possible explanations and
3. subject to change or revision whenever subsequent material warrants a different explanation

a) **The content of social diagnosis** (assessment) in case work process falls into the triangular pattern. It consists of:

1. The nature of the problem brought and the goals sought by the client, in 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 and purpose of the agency and the kind of help it can offer and/or make available.

b) **Types of Diagnosis**

Perlman has described three types of diagnosis that is carried on in social case work process. These are:

- dynamic diagnosis,
- clinical diagnosis,
- etiological diagnosis.

Dynamic diagnosis

Dynamic diagnosis gives an understanding of the current problem of the client and the forces currently operating within the client, within the social environment and between his environment. It gives the answers of the question- what is the trouble? What psychological, physical and social factors are contributing to it? What solution is sought? What are the means available within the client, his/her environment? What are organized services and resources by which problem may be affected? The nature of such diagnosis is changeable because it is the beginning phase of social case work practice.

Clinical diagnosis

In clinical diagnosis, the case worker attempts to classify the client by nature of his sickness / problem. He identifies certain forms and qualities of client's personality and malfunctioning in his behaviour. The clinical diagnosis describes both the nature of the problem and its relation to the client and the helping means and goals. Such type of diagnosis is useful only when it becomes apparent that a disorder of personality accompanies the social disorder, creating and complicating it.

Etiological diagnosis

Etiological diagnosis is concerned with the explanation of the beginning of the life history of the problem of the client, basically the problem that lies in the client's personality make up or functioning. The history of his development as a problem encountering, problem-solving human being may provide the case worker with an understanding of what his client suffers from and what is the extent of his coping ability likely to be. Etiological diagnosis is more useful in explaining or rigid reactions. When inspite of fact that the client's present problem are in the centre of attention, the client's response are not in accordance with, the past history and its appraisal in the light of client's current capacities, goals and problems are used for the intervention. This type of diagnosis contributes to understanding the nature of the problem to be dealt with, the person who has the problem, and the ways and means that can be anticipated as helpful.

c) Steps in diagnosis (Assessment)

The following steps are taken while diagnosing a problem

1. The worker begins to focus on problematic behaviours. He begins with the survey of both functional and dysfunctional behaviours in his environment. He clarifies various complains and problems in terms of excesses and deficits. He evaluates the client's personal strengths as well as of his environment.
2. He targets the specified behaviours. This involves an attempt of breaking down complex behaviours into their component parts.
3. Baseline data are collected to specify those events that appear to be currently controlling the problematic behaviours.
4. The collected information is summarized in an attempt to anticipate any major problem in intervention and as a way of beginning to establish objective for intervention.

5. Selecting priorities for intervention is the final step of the diagnosis. Concentration on one problem at one time makes intervention process more manageable and allows both client and worker to channel their energies into one area. It is the best way of handling and proper use of available resources.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

- 1) Define the term diagnosis (assessment) and discuss its types.

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- 2) Discuss the various steps in diagnosis.

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3.5 INTERVENTION (TREATMENT)

The objective of social case work intervention is to alleviate the client's distress and restoring, maintaining or enhancing the social functioning of an individual in need of help. It is to enhance the client's comfort, satisfaction and self realization. This may require enhancing adaptive skills of the ego and functioning of the person-situation system. According to Hamilton, treatment is the sum total of all activities and services directed towards helping an individual with a problem. The focus is on the relieving of the immediate problem and, if feasible, modifies any basic difficulties which precipitated it.

Social case work process begins with the initial contact with the client. The process of intervention passes through many phases. i.e. (i) initial phase, (ii) motivation and role induction, (iii) primary contract, (iv) diagnosis and assessment, (v) establishing intervention goals, (vi) developing intervention plan, (vii) preparation for actual intervention, (viii) intervention in practice, (ix) monitoring and evaluating the effects of intervention, and (x) planning of follow-up and termination of the therapeutic relationship.

Application of Intervention Methods

In order to achieve the goals set by the worker, conventionally the following methods of social intervention have been mentioned:

- a. Direct
- b. Environmental Modification
- c. Administration of Practical Service

- a) **Direct method** of intervention deals with the different ways that are used by the worker to promote a specific kind of behaviour on the part of the client. Pearlman sees direct intervention as the provision of a systematic but flexible way in which the client can work over his/her problem, his/her relation to it and possible solutions. Here case worker exerts his/her influence directly on the client. Direct intervention techniques are used where the client needs direction because of his/her ignorance, anxiety, and weaknesses of his/her ego strengths. The degree of influence, the case worker is able to exert, may depend on the relationship between himself/herself and the client.

Direct intervention is given through counselling, therapeutic interviewing, clarification and interpretation leading to an insight. Supportive intervention for the direct benefit of the client is provided through guidance, externalization of interests, re-assurance, suggestion, persuasion and advice.

Counselling is a personal help directed toward the solution of a problem which a person finds that he/she cannot solve himself/herself and on which he/she, therefore, seeks the help of a skilled person whose knowledge, experience and general orientation can be brought into play in an attempt to solve the problem. It is a psychological help in which information and clarification are used for making the client aware of the problem. It is always used for a particular purpose like marriage counselling, occupational counselling, family counselling, school counselling, etc.

Therapeutic interviewing is used where intra- psychic conflict is present in the environment or neuroses or behavior disorders are acted out. The purpose of such interviewing is that of psychotherapy which aims at personality, competence and self-actualization, competence and self-actualization. For the analysis of the unconscious, social case worker applies the techniques of free association, dream interpretation, analysis of resistance and transference. For behaviour modification, social case worker makes use of the techniques of positive enforcement, negative enforcement, positive punishment, negative punishment, systematic desensitization and covert desensitization. Sometimes faulty interaction play basic role in developing maladaptive behavior. For the improvement of interpersonal relations and correct communication social case worker practices marital and family therapy techniques and transactional analysis.

It is a process through which **clarification** about the client himself/herself, his/her environment and the public with whom he/she is associated is made. Social case worker is in need of understanding the person, his/her environment and his/her social network. Clarification may consist of information given to the client so that he/she becomes capable of understanding himself/herself, his/her environment and his/her social network, which he/she does not possess and without which he/she cannot see clearly what steps he/she ought to take.

Sometimes conflicting feelings and strong emotions lead the individual to distort reality so seriously or react to it so inappropriately that understanding is impossible without deeper perception. Social case worker interprets the factors of the problem, related facts, attitudes of client and unconscious feelings in relation to the reality situation. He/she helps the client to an awareness of his/her strong projection of his inner needs and his/her subjective responses upon

the outer world. Insight development is always accompanied by some degree of clarification and psychological support.

Psychological support is useful in decreasing tension and guilt, increasing self-confidence, encouraging healthy functioning or a way of functioning that maintains the client's equilibrium and in helping him/her to build up compensatory strengths and satisfaction. The case worker accepts him/her and his/her feelings, and shows keen interest in him/her. He/she clarifies the problem and encourages him to take his/her own decision. Social case worker helps him/her to strengthen his/her client's ego through the techniques of guidance, reassurance, suggestion, persuasion and psychological support.

- b) **Environmental modification** means to bring change in the social as well as physical conditions of the client so that he/she may be relieved from excessive stresses and strains. The case worker suggests what steps may or may not help the client to cope better with his/her problems. He/she plans with him/her his/her emotional, professional and recreational activities. He/she gives appropriate advice to members of his/her environment and modifies their attitude favorably. Though interview is used in this method the main emphasis is laid to change in his/her conditions. When social resources and systematized social conditions are used as main sources for the solution of the problem, it becomes social intervention. Home services, camps, group experience activities, training and employment for livelihood and other activities of adjustment are such type of programmes. The purpose of such activities is always to minimize the tension in the client.

Social case worker organizes such type of activities through which the client's experiences help in the personality growth and adjustment in the society. Though practical services are also made available but the focus is always on change in conditions. Attempts are also made to change and modify the attitude of parents, teachers, spouse, employer, friends and relatives in accordance with the needs of the client. In general environmental modification (manipulation) is undertaken by the case worker only when environmental pressure upon the client are beyond the latter's control but can be modified by the case worker.

- c) **Administration of practical service** involves those which are extended to the client for help to choose and use the social resource afforded by the community. According to Hamilton administration of practical services is the oldest and best known case work method of intervention. Porter Lee was the first social worker who emphasized and classified such resources. Administration of practical services means to help the client in such a way that he could select and use the resources available in the community. Social case worker helps the client for adequate knowledge of available resources through the techniques of discussion, information, clarification and direction. The use of services is essential to solve any kind of problem and if the problem is of social nature, then it becomes more essential for the worker to help the client in this direction. These services take the form of intervention as they satisfy his/her needs and give satisfaction. The client knows the type of services. It is the job of case worker to take the client to the resources. Money, medical care, nursery schools, scholarships, foster homes, legal aid, recreational facilities, etc. are such type of services that any person may need in order to resolve a given problem in his/her daily living.

Termination and Follow-up

Termination means ending the process that begun when client agreed to undergo social case work intervention process. The termination process is decided by the worker and the client after mutual discussion and agreement. Termination is the stage when the worker has the confidence in the client's ability to cope with the present and future situations. It is neither wise nor necessary for the termination to be an abrupt one. Termination should be done in a phased manner so that dependency on the worker is almost over. The frequency and amount of contacts should be gradually decreased. Particularly, the follow-up should be planned on a progressively diminishing basis, first, perhaps after two weeks, then a month, then three months, six months and a year following the termination of the formal programme.

Evaluation

Evaluation is the process in which the worker tries to find out the effectiveness and success of the process. It is the activity which ascertains whether the social case work process has achieved the desired goals, in a case. In social case work practice evaluation provides the crucial feedback to the case worker and the client regarding whether the intervention programme is succeeding as desired, whether established goals have been achieved, whether modifications in the programme are necessary and whether the client is being helped in the real sense. Social case worker evaluates the content of the programme and its effectiveness inner strength gained by the client and the success of himself/herself in helping the client.

Recording

Recording is the process in which all the facts gathered are recorded along with success or failures in the social case work process. It is humanly impossible to retain in mind all the information related to a client. Record writing is important for formulating the social assessment and plan of action in each and every case. Recording is done regularly as the case moves based on this chronologically linked material. Summaries may be prepared periodically.

Role of Social Worker

The Social Worker, in each phase, has to be an expert who is able to understand human behaviour and life situations. The social worker should have proper research orientation so that he /she is able to study and collect relevant data regarding the client. He/ she should have understanding of nature, motivations, strengths, weaknesses and dynamics of the role expectations as they influence the individuals. The social worker should have knowledge of the society- its values, traditions, customs, taboos, problems, priorities etc and while working with individuals. The social worker must himself/herself be clear as to what, realistically, the role's requirements are, and he/she work accordingly. The social worker should have knowledge of available services and resources .While dealing with the client the social worker has to perform various roles such as care giver, enabler, therapist, guide, counsellor consultant, mobilizer, an evaluator, as an advocate, and a referral agent.

Check Your Progress IV

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

- 1) What do you understand by intervention (treatment) and discuss its various methods?

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- 2) Briefly discuss the role of the social worker in intervention process (treatment)

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3.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have studied the various phases of case work process. Case work is one of the primary methods of social work which aims to help individuals to solve their problems and enhance social functioning. The various phase of case work are study, assessment, intervention, termination and evaluation which are interlinked with each other and they are similar in form to a rope, woven of multiple strands. When one cuts the rope at any point, all the component strands are exposed.

In the study phase the case worker establishes professional and purpose full relationship using skills of case worker. In study phase he/she tries to study the client and his/her circumstances in context to his/ her problem. In the study process the case worker must secure all and every fact that taken together, through logical and inferential reasoning, would reveal the client's personality and the situation. The methods used for collecting information's in this phase include interviews, observation, study of available records and collateral contacts.

Assessment is the phase in which we try to understand the problem and its causative factors. It is an attempt to arrive at as an exact definition as possible of the social situation and personality of a given client. It is a search for the cause of the problem which brings the client to the worker for the help. It aims at finding answers to three major questions: What is the problem? How has it arisen? What can be done to solve it?

Intervention is the phase in which it is decided what kind of help will be best for alleviating the client's distress and restoring, maintaining or enhancing social functioning. In order to achieve the goals set by the worker, conventionally the following methods of social intervention are used i.e. direct intervention, environmental modification and administration of practical services.

Termination means ending the process that begun when the client agreed to undergo social case work intervention process. Termination is the stage when the worker has confidence in the client's ability to cope with present and arising situations.

Evaluation is the phase where we try to know what the outcomes of the efforts are. It is the activity which ascertains whether social case work process has achieved the desired goals in a case.

Recording is the process in which all the facts gathered are recorded, events and success or failures related to case work process are being listed for the purpose of measurements of results, administrative, teaching and supervision and research.

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UNIT 4 TOOLS OF CASE WORK

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**Archana Dassi*

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4.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit you will be able to understand:

- the different tools used in casework process;
- the purpose, process and skills for interviewing;
- doing different types of recording;
- skills and techniques of home-visiting; and
- purpose and ethics in supervision.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Casework is the oldest method of social work for solving individual's problems and improving his/her social relations. Caseworkers have traditionally been more concerned about their clients than social workers in other settings. The basis of casework is the natural response of one individual to another in some need that cannot be met alone. Therefore, social workers engaged in helping relationship, need training, acquire skills and techniques that equip them with professional knowledge and expertise in helping their client.

Casework is predominantly an art. Little can be achieved unless the first contact with the person needing help, helps to establish relationship, which can be maintained throughout the case work process. Information gathering, diagnosis as well as developing intervention strategies are possible by means of interview and home visits. These are the tools frequently used by the caseworkers. Recording usually follows interviews and home visits and reflect the discussions held with client during or after the interviews. Further effective supervision facilitates the worker to offer effective service to the client. This unit describes the various tools used by social caseworkers that could maximize helping relationship.

4.2 INTERVIEWING: PURPOSE

The interview is the most important and most frequently employed, social work tool, by which the worker provides direct service to the client. It is the structure for operationalizing the interaction between a worker and a client. It is an art as used differently depending on the skills of caseworker.

The casework interview refers to the meeting of the social worker and the client in a face-to-face conversation. It is a purposeful and a professional activity on the part of the social worker. The general purposes of conducting interviews could be described as informational (social study interview), diagnostic (to arrive at an appraisal), and therapeutic (to effect change).

Social Study Interview is a selective gathering of life history material related to social functioning of the client. The information enables the worker to understand the client in relation to his/her environment.

Diagnostic Decision Making Interview is geared towards appraisal and determination of the eligibility for a service. These interviews facilitate definite administrative decisions. The child welfare worker for example interviews the foster care or adoptive applicant to determine if the agency should place the child with them. This interview obtains selective information to decide what the agency will do keeping in view the interests of the child.

Therapeutic Interview aims at bringing change in the client, in social situation or personality or both. The goal is more effective social functioning on the part of client as a consequence of the therapeutic changes.

Preparing for Interview

Preparing for interview is different. The worker needs to be flexible in structuring and guiding the interview, depending on the purpose of interview and the needs of the client. It should be carried out in a manner that encourages interaction and relationship building. In preparing for any interview the worker has three tasks: 1) Planning the environment for the interview. 2) Planning the content of the interview, and 3) Tuning in.

- 1) In planning the environment for the interview, the worker thinks about the physical conditions of the interview. The interview could take place in an office or outside. Wherever the interview takes place the environment should be comfortable with least distracting features and interruptions such as phone calls or knocks on the door. Attention should also be given to the time of the interview so that neither worker nor client will be hurried or the interview being overly long.
- 2) In planning for the content of the interview, the worker should recall the goal and the purpose of the casework service and will identify the goal for this particular interview. The worker reviews notes about the previous interview and decides upon the structure of the interview and questions to be asked. This planning is done to give form and focus to the interview.
- 3) In tuning in, the worker first tries to anticipate the client's needs and feelings in the interview and think about his own response to those feelings and needs. The worker tries to become aware of his own feelings and attitudes that might interfere with effective communication.

All interviews have three stages: 1) the opening or beginning stage, 2) the middle or working-together stage, and 3) the ending stage.

The beginning phase starts when the worker tries to make the client comfortable. During the beginning stage, the worker tries to define the purpose of the interview or recalls plans made in a previous session. Dialogue is held with the client to plan the purpose and needs of the interview.

The middle phase begins when the worker and the client reach on an agreement about the work to be done. The worker needs to maintain a sense of timing attuned to the client's pace of work and refocus if the content strays from the task, or to renegotiate the purpose if that is indicated. The worker also should monitor the communication for the effectiveness of interview.

The ending stage is reached when the purpose of the interview has been fulfilled. In bringing the interview to an end, the worker summarizes what has happened during the interview and how it fits into the service being offered. The worker and the client together plan the next steps, which will include work to be done by each before the next interview.

Skills to Be Used By the Caseworker during the Interview

Five groups of skills that should be used during an interview: observation skills; listening skills; questioning skills, focusing, guiding and interpreting skills; and climate-setting skills.

- i. **Observation Skills** includes worker's ability to understand nonverbal behaviour of the clients.

Sensitivity to the nonverbal ones is useful for tuning in to where the client really is in relation to the issue being discussed, for checking the validity of the client's verbal expression, and for feedback. The caseworker should make efforts to understand the meaning of client's body language, opening and closing sentences, shifts in conversation, recurrent references, inconsistencies or gaps in information shared and points of stress and conflict indicated by the client.

- ii. **Listening Skills** involve understanding what the client is attempting to communicate. Listening reflects an attitude of openness and acceptance, and involves a sense of timing that allows the worker to focus, on the client and what is being said. The Worker does not shut off the communication by premature evaluation or advice.

- iii. **Questioning Skills** refers to knowing the various types of questions to be asked and the usefulness of each type of question. The first category of questions include open and closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions allow expression of feelings and give the worker the opportunity to understand the client's perception of the situation. In developing a social history, it is usually advisable to mix open and closed-ended questions, which allows discussion between the worker and the client about the facts as well about the client's life experiences.

There are leading and responding questions. A leading question is used when it is desirable for a client to continue to explore the subject at hand. An

example would be: “You have tried to cope with this problem, haven’t you? A responding question follows the lead of the client’s response. In an answer and agree question, the client is expected to answer in such a way as to agree with the worker.

- iv. **Focusing, Guiding and Interpreting Skills** enable the worker to accomplish the tasks necessary as per the objectives. It includes capacity to paraphrase and summarize, confront and to be silent.

Paraphrasing and summarizing clarify what has been said and enhance understanding towards progress as a truly joint effort. Confrontation is bringing out into the open feelings, issues, and disagreements. It involves looking at these elements and attempting to find ways to deal with them. If feelings, issues, and disagreement remain hidden, they may interfere with the work at hand. Silence may indicate resistance, frustration, or anger, but it also can provide a time for worker and client to be reflective.

It is the worker’s responsibility to direct the interview but not to control it. The worker by focusing, guiding, and directing, enables the process of the casework to proceed toward the desired outcome.

- v. **Climate Setting Skills** refers to enabling or facilitating work. The three characteristics that enable the casework process are empathy, genuineness, and non-possessive warmth. Empathy is the capacity to communicate to the client that the worker accepts and cares for the client. Genuineness is the capacity of the worker to communicate to the client that the worker is trustworthy and non-possessive warmth is the capacity to communicate to the client both concern and desire for an intimacy that allows the client to make decisions, to have feelings negative and positive, and to feel worthwhile. These skills greatly affect the nature of the caseworker’s relationship with client and the quality of the communication.

Case Illustration

Radha, a fifteen years old girl has been in foster care for the last one year. Radha’s mother is a single parent who has five other children ranging in age six to eighteen; She is third from the oldest and she is the oldest girl. Radha was a disobedient and careless child and did not want to take care of her younger siblings. She showed least interest in attending school and often bunked it. She found it difficult to relate to her mother. So it was decided to keep her in foster care with the goal to give a period of time in which she can grow without excessive demands. Radha has now decided to return back home. The worker and Radha are now discussing how Radha can respond to her mother after returning back home.

Preparation

Radha and the worker decided to meet at 2.30 pm in the school’s study hall. The worker called the school in the morning to be sure about the schedule and whether the room was ready for them. The worker reached the school half an hour early to check the meeting room and waited for Radha to come.

Beginning stage

As Radha entered the room the worker greeted her and she responded to it. The worker reminded Radha that they are going to discuss two things—her behaviour

with her mother and taking care of young siblings. To know whether she could comply with her mother's demand and enjoy the siblings company, it was suggested to spend a weekend with her family.

Middle stage

Radha was cheerful on returning from home after meeting the mother and younger brothers and sisters. She told the worker that things had gone well but what was really great was that her mother had asked her to take care of the youngest brother while she went out. Initially she refused to be with the brother but then agreed.

Worker asked Radha how she felt when she told her mother she did not want to take care of her younger brother. Radha said, "*Scared*". But have to do it otherwise things would have become same all over again. The worker said, you have become mature and also asked her how would she handle frustrations when she will go back home. Radha replied that she could deal with these feelings by talking with her mother about what she didn't like.

Ending stage

As the interview time came to an end the worker said that they discussed important things that day but it was also important that they began to plan for a time for Radha to go home for good. Radha said that she really wanted to go home and for it wanted the worker to meet her mother. The worker said that next week a date could be fixed, in consultation with her mother to return home. Radha was extremely happy and moved out of the room.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) Discuss the different stages in the social work interview?

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2) Identify the skills required in casework interview?

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4.3 RECORDING PURPOSE

Recording has always been given considerable importance in social work. It is because the caseworker has to know many clients intimately and it is essential that interviews and details should be recorded in a way that recalls the particular client with all his/her individual differences. The records serve various purposes and some of them are as follows:

1. **Documentation of social work activity-** Case records provide an ongoing picture of the nature of social work involvement with the client, progress in achieving social work goals and outcome.
2. **Continuity of service-** When a client contacts the social work agency, the service is provided by the entire setting. In case an individual staff member is not available the agency must be able to pick up where he or she left off. This would be possible with the help of record only.
3. **Quality control-** The quality and quantity of services being provided could be known by reviewing written records that present a picture of social work activity. Record review is also a means of assessing the kind and quality of services being provided by the caseworker and identifies the areas of strength and weakness where staff needs in-service training to upgrade their skills.
4. **Statistical reporting-** Case records are periodically used by social work agencies as sources of data to justify agency's activities, to seek and maintain funding, to substantiate the need for additional staff or to do programme planning.
5. **Organizing the worker's thoughts-** Recording provides factual data and observations, which could lead to more in-depth diagnostic assessment and treatment planning.
6. **Inter-disciplinary communication-** Recording is a means to communicate social-diagnostic information and recommendations for consideration by other professionals who may be involved with the client in a team approach to treatment.
7. **Teaching and research-** Properly maintained case records could be a mechanism for mutual assessment of practice skills and the teaching of new or refined techniques. Case records contain a wealth of information for the professional researcher seeking to gather data on various categories of clients, problems faced by them.
8. **A therapeutic tool-** Recording can be used as a therapeutic tool with the client to help him to respond to treatment.

Types of Recording

Recording has taken many forms. **Process recording** is a specialized and highly detailed form of recording. Everything that takes place during a client in contact, including the worker's feelings and thinking is noted down. It is especially useful to the social worker striving to further develop understanding and skill in difficult situations or in situations in which the worker is developing new skills. The usefulness of the process recording depends to a considerable extent on the ability of the worker to recall exactly what happened, in what order and to look at the

facts in an objective manner in order to get at underlying feelings and meanings. Process recording is time consuming so, should be used carefully in selected cases.

Another type of recording is the **summary record**. It includes entry data, social history, a plan of action, periodic summaries of significant information, action taken by the worker and a statement of what was accomplished as the case gets closed. Summary records are short and easy to use when considering the total service process. The focus is on what happened with the client. Summary records are important in situations where long term, ongoing contact with the client and a series of workers may be involved and provide a picture of what happened with the client

A contemporary kind of recording is the **problem-oriented recording** used in interdisciplinary setting. Problem-oriented records contain four parts. First, there is a database that contains information pertinent to the client and work with the client. This includes such things as age, sex, marital status, functioning limitations, financial situation etc. Second is a problem list that includes a statement of initial complaints and assessment of the concerned staff. Third are plans and goals related to each identified problem. Fourth are follow-up notes about what was done and the outcome of that activity.

Format for Casework Recording

- a. Brief introduction with identifying data and purpose of work
- b. Interaction with field person/situation-details of interactional dynamics
- c. Assessment of –
 - i) the need and of why the need has arisen;
 - ii) personal factors;
 - iii) interpersonal factors;
 - iv) situational and environmental factors;
 - v) of strengths and weaknesses;
 - vi) of earlier efforts made by the person;
 - vii) of resources available;
 - viii) expectations from the caseworker; and
 - ix) reflection upon the situation with a developmental perspective.
- d. Plan-Intervention strategy
- e. Self evaluation-caseworkers role, rationale for action, analysis of workers feelings and attitudes and learning

Case Illustration

This example illustrates three ways in which the same case material might be recorded.

Process Recording

On 2/4/2001, a nurse called me and referred the case of Mrs. Banerjee. She said that Mrs. Banerjee had been brought in for emergency appendectomy two days

ago. Yesterday afternoon she became very upset and concerned about how her children were being cared for. Nurses on the evening shift discussed the situation with her husband, Mr. Banerjee when he came to visit. The children, a boy aged four and a girl aged two have been cared for by a neighbour during the day. Mr. Banerjee left them with a babysitter last night. He too showed some concern, saying that neither he nor his wife wanted the children with the neighbour as they questioned some of her child care practices but didn't know what he could do right now. The request is for me to see if I can find suitable childcare.

I immediately obtained the medical chart and found that she is doing well post-surgically. There is concern that her emotional state may affect her recovery. I then went to talk to Mrs. Banerjee in her room. As I am a medical social worker, I explained that it was my job to help with problems that arose because people were sick and in the hospital. I told her that I was here because she seemed very concerned about her children and might need some help in finding care for the children while she was in the hospital. She again expressed concern that the children would be taken out of the home, although she was not as agitated as at first. I told her that usually children should remain in their familiar surroundings when parents are hospitalized, as they are less apt to be upset about the situation if they stay in the home. Mrs. Banerjee then said, "I don't know what we can do. There are no relatives we can call on. Mr. Banerjee might lose his job if he stays home to take care of the children. *(The recording would then continue to describe the interaction between the worker and the client. The actual verbatim dialogue of the interview is recorded where possible.)*

Summary recording

On 2/4/2001, Medical Social Work Department was requested by Nurse Daisy because Mrs. Banerjee is upset about childcare for her two children, a boy and a girl of age four and two years respectively. Social worker met Mrs. Banerjee and developed with her a plan for the care of the children. A friend is identified who will care for the children during the day until she is discharged. A babysitter will continue to be used in the evenings when Mr. Banerjee visits. Worker will contact Domestic help's Service to set up plans for use of a home maid when Mrs. Banerjee returns home until she is physically able to care for the children.

Problem –Oriented recording

Name: Mrs. Aparna Banerjee

Age: 28 years

Referral from: Nurse Daisy

Date: 2/4/2001

Medical condition: Emergency appendectomy

Subjective: patient upset about care of her children while she is in hospital. Seems appropriately concerned mother and good relationship with husband.

Objective: a neighbour is now caring for children during the day and father and babysitters at night. Parents do not feel comfortable with daytime arrangement. Mother will be in hospital for three more days and needs some help with childcare for at least two weeks after she returns home.

Assessment: alternative childcare arrangements should be explored for family. The Brown's are unaware of community resources that might be of help to them. Mrs. Banerjee is verbal and discusses plans, but Mr. Banerjee should also be included in the planning.

Plan: obtain a list of community resources that may be of the help to the family. During visiting hours on 2.4.2001 discuss with both Mr. And Mrs. Banerjee possible solution and set up a childcare plan for the next three weeks.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) What is the difference between process and problem-oriented recording?

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4.4 HOME VISIT

Home visit is another important tool used by the caseworker for gathering information about client. It is difficult to date the beginning of the home visit movement because caring for those in needs has traditionally been a responsibility assumed by relatives, friends and neighbours. However, the foundation for providing home-based care by trained home visitor was laid by Florence Nightingale. Trained nurse initially provided care to sick patient and home care was linked to nursing care.

PHILOSOPHY

The home visit is based on two fundamental beliefs namely delivering services in the home can ameliorate existing difficulties or can prevent problems from developing later. Moral, social and political forces have prompted such services over time.

Three terms are frequently used to describe the rationale for home visit: empowerment, enablement and enhancement. Empowerment can be described as facilitating or maintaining the client or family's ability to define its goals and make its own decisions. Enhancement incorporates the concept of building upon strengths that already exist, and enablement suggests helping families locate resources that can facilitate the family's own actions. In addition to these concepts the *Ecological Theory of Human Development* and *family systems theory* provide a framework for the practice of home visiting. These concepts and theories focus attention on the needs and priorities of families, importance of the interrelations within families and their environments and stressed the importance of looking at future as well as immediate needs.

Three questions that must be kept in mind during the home visit are:

- Who is the client?

- How is the client served?
- What is the role of caseworker?

Who is the client? The answer to this question provides information on the client's identity, problems being experienced by him/her. As one begins to visit the families, the complex interactions that exist among family members become clear and difficulties in relationships can be observed by the caseworker. Viewed in this way then the client may not be a disturbed individual alone rather focus may be required on other family members also.

How is the client served? Traditionally, home visit was viewed as treatment or intervention for specific problems and was restricted to the predefined needs of clients. Presently a more broad-based approach is envisaged that conceptualize family as a unit, responds to critical needs of all family members with a focus on prevention, building family strengths and normalization.

What is the role of caseworker? For most of nineteenth century the caseworker was considered as an expert with more knowledge and experience than the client. Shifts in the home visitor's role resulted from changes in the view of family. Client is no longer a passive recipient rather as an active participant and the family is encouraged to define its own needs, priorities and preferences. The caseworker therefore is a collaborator, a negotiator and an expert in the helping skills.

PRINCIPLES OF HOME-VISIT

Five principles that should be kept in mind while conducting home-visit:

1. Family support should enhance the ability of families to work toward their own goals and deal effectively with their own problems.
2. Home-based intervention should be individualized, based upon an assessment of the social, psychological, cultural, educational, economic and physical or health characteristics of the family.
3. A home visitor must be responsive to the immediate needs of the families as well as to their long-term goals.
4. A helping relation should be collaboration between the home visitor and the family members.
5. The family should be recognized as a social system and intervention efforts directed at one individual within the family can influence other family members and can influence the overall functioning of the family.

SKILLS IN HOME VISIT

At the heart of home visit is the relationship between the home visitor and the client for establishing good rapport. To be effective helper, a number of skills are essential and some of them are as follows:

- ✓ The home visitor must be a patient listener.
- ✓ The home visitor must be sensitive to verbal and non-verbal communication from the family about its desires and goals.

- ✓ The home visitor must be able to assess difficulties being encountered by the family.
- ✓ The home visitor must be able to promote those skills, knowledge, attitudes and environmental conditions that contribute to effective coping.
- ✓ The home visitor should have the capacity to respond to the client's feeling and experiences as if they were his own
- ✓ The home visitor must be able to see a person with worth and dignity, commitment, understanding, non-judgmental attitude and warmth.
- ✓ The home visitor must be able to present himself/herself genuinely without presenting a facade.

HOME VISITING TECHNIQUES

Home visitors in their interaction with the client use a number of specific techniques for preparing the client to become better prepared to deal with some event in his or her life or to understand better the important aspect of a problem.

A. Modeling

Modeling is demonstrating for the client a specific behaviour. It is a technique particularly advantageous when the client cannot seem to visualize carrying out a particular action or cannot think how to begin an activity. It is also useful when a client seems to lack the skills necessary for action. Modeling such situations could include showing how one might respond in different situations. In most situations once the visitor has modeled the behaviour, then the client should be allowed to perform the behaviour. Doing so assures that the client has understood what was modeled and the behaviour can be matched to that of the visitor.

B. Role Playing

In role-playing, home visitor acts out one real life role and the client acts out another in order to help the client gain skill and confidence to deal with a difficult situation. This technique is particularly appropriate for those situations in which one has difficulty in being assertive because of the newness of the situation.

C. Use of examples

Using examples is a common daily event for people during their interactions with others and is often used when one is explaining, describing or teaching something to a second person. Home visitor should use the examples that may be relevant and fit with realistic experiences in the client's life. The use of examples helps a client feel at ease with something that they may not have worked out or is not satisfied with.

4.5 CASE ILLUSTRATION

Bunty was a boy who stole money in order to have fun with his peer group. His father appeared to be an intelligent man, well dressed and had a good impression. Bunty had a high opinion of his father who used to come with him to the child guidance clinic. The mother seemed rather out of the picture but the explanation given was that she was very busy with the younger children. So the father

accompanied the adolescent son to the clinic. After a few weeks it was decided to visit the mother and neither father nor son objected. The social worker found a home that was terribly dirty with hardly any furniture and a large untidy mother surrounded with several small children. The worker noticed a picture of a group of soldiers on the wall that was the only decoration and Bunty's father was in the middle of the picture in the officer's uniform. The worker remarked that she had not realized that the father had been in the army and the mother without any hesitation said that he had not; the group of men had dressed up as a joke to have their photograph taken. It was significant that client's father had chosen to pose as an officer.

The visit presented a very different picture of Bunty's upbringing. His father had a large element of fraud though he did not come in conflict with the law. He was satisfied to give the impression of being a comfortably well-off, educated gentleman and his vanity was appeased by such small deceits as the photograph of himself as an officer. The son who copied his father was less subtle in his attempts to show off and thus came before the juvenile court and from there to child guidance clinic. The court did not have an adequate home report and the father had created such a good impression when he spoke for his son that the boy had been referred to the clinic for a mental examination, as there appeared to be no other explanation for his misdemeanors.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1) Mention any five skills for home-visitor?

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2) What is the advantage of Modeling as a technique of home-visit?

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4.6 SUPERVISION

Social work supervision plays a major role in determining the quality of service delivered to clients and in ensuring the professional development and job satisfaction of frontline social workers.

Supervision had its origin in the Charity Organization Society movement in the nineteenth century. Friendly visitors were the direct service workers providing service to families. Limited caseloads coupled with high turnover of volunteers meant that the agencies faced a continuous problem of recruiting, training and

directing new visitors. These tasks were taken care by the ‘paid agents’ employed by the Charity Organization Societies and they are the predecessors of modern supervisor.

FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION

The history of social work practice reveals that the roots of social work supervision were in its administrative function (Poertner and Rapp, 1983; Shulman, 1995; Tsui, 1997). Its administrative function can be traced back to the Charity Organization Societies movement (COS), which began in 1878 (Munson, 2002). Supervision acquired an educational purpose in 1911, when the first course in supervision was offered by Mary Richmond and observed that providing support is the third function of social work supervision. This combination of functions makes social work supervision unique and humanistic.

OBJECTIVES OF SUPERVISION

The objectives of supervision are both short term and long term. The short-term objective is to improve the worker’s capacity to do his job more effectively. It is to help the worker grow and develop professionally, to maximize the clinical knowledge and skills for performing autonomously and independently of supervision. These short-term objectives are the means for achieving long-term objectives, which are efficient, and effective social work services to the clients. Towards this objective the supervisor administratively integrates and coordinates the supervisees work with others in the agency, educates the workers to a more skillful performance in their tasks and supports and sustains the workers in motivated performance of these tasks.

DEFINITION OF SUPERVISION

A social work supervisor is an agency administrative-staff member to whom authority is delegated to direct, coordinate, enhance and evaluate the on-the job performance of the supervisees. In implementing this responsibility, the supervisor performs administrative, educational and supportive functions in interaction with the supervisee in the context of positive relationship. The supervisor’s ultimate objective is to deliver to agency, clients the best possible service both qualitatively and quantitatively. Supervisors do not directly offer service to the client but they do indirectly affect the level of service offered through their impact on the direct service supervisees.

ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN SUPERVISION

The supervisor should act in an ethical, humane manner towards supervisees. Some of the ethical considerations in supervision are as follows:

1. It is unethical to assign a case to a supervisee who is without the necessary skills and knowledge to offer effective service.
2. Both supervisors and supervisees should not present themselves as competent to deliver professional services beyond their training level of experience and competence.
3. Supervisor should maintain confidentiality of information shared by the supervisee in respect to the client.
4. Supervisor should avoid dual relationships with supervisees particularly roles related to sexual exploitation.

5. Supervisor should continue to strive towards self-development, upgrading skills and monitoring their own effectiveness.
6. Supervisor should be available in case of emergency or when crisis decisions need to be made. Throughout, the supervisor's responsibility is initially and primarily to the needs of the clients and secondarily to the needs of the supervisee.

4.7 CASE ILLUSTRATION

In an interview, a client threatens his wife. In warning his wife, confidentiality is violated. In not warning his wife, worker is partner to the injury if she is subsequently hurt. How absolute are the limits of confidentiality that the supervisor asks the supervisee to observe? Increasingly, the answer is found in malpractice case law.

Check Your Progress IV

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

- 1) What is the objective of Supervision in Social Casework?

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- 2) List any two ethical considerations in Social Casework Supervision.

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4.8 LET US SUM UP

Casework is one of the oldest methods of Social Work. The goal is to help individuals to solve their problems and enhance social functioning. As an art, Caseworker needs to be skillful in developing intimate yet purposeful relationship with the client. With the help of the tools of interview, recording and home visit, caseworker facilitates the client's adjustment to his or her environment while supervision enables them for better delivery of services.

The social work interview is flexible and structured. It is a purposeful interaction that should be conducted in least distracting environment. The skills of observation, listening, questioning, focusing and climate setting help in yielding a wealth of information about client and problem under consideration. Another important tool that is of help to the caseworker is recording. Process recording, summative recording and problem-oriented recording are the three major styles of record writing. The casework recording should contain a brief introduction of client, its problem, assessment, intervention strategy and evaluation by the caseworker. Next,

with the help of home-visit, caseworker gathers information about the client and tries to empower, enable and enhance him/her. The techniques of modeling, role-playing and setting examples are used in home visit to help the client to understand the problem and learn ways and means to deal with them. Further, the quality of caseworker's service and the professional development is ensured with the help of supervision. It is an administrative and educational tool for improving the worker's capacity to do his job more effectively.

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UNIT 5 SOME THEORETICAL APPROACHES IN CASE WORK

Contents

**Archana Dassi*

- 5.0 Objectives
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5.0 OBJECTIVES

The present unit deals with some theoretical approaches in casework, which has been the predominant social work method in social work practice. After studying the unit you will be able to know more about Existential Theory, Cognitive Theory, Behavioural Modification theory, Problem solving approach and eclectic approach.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In a society of paradoxes of poverty and affluence, of overpopulation and brilliant technology, of deeply disturbing contradictions that arise from accelerated complexity that produces dehumanization, social casework makes its contribution by its commitment to the individual in society. The commitment to understand, to differentiate, to act for and with the individual gives social casework crucial importance in alleviating the human suffering related to society's problems. The agony of the individual is seen in his search for autonomy, self-realization, and productive and decent living with his fellowmen. Never had our society such profound need for institutionalized concern for, and competence to deal with, individual development, purposes, and problems. Traditionally the role of social casework in a profession has been to promote individually satisfying and socially constructive living. Thus, it has taken a unique place among disciplines dedicated to the development of a humane society that values each of its members.

As part of social work, social casework finds its cause in the promotion of the welfare of the individual in the society and its function in the implementation of this cause. Social casework serves as one aspect of the conscience of society in so far as it is proud, competent, and passionate in its dedication to the individuality of all persons. Competence is necessary to unify the cause and the function, to give reality to pride and direction to passion. Competence requires knowledge, understanding, and a coherent guide for its enactment in the service of cause. What is the basis of competence in social casework? Keeping this in view, the theories of casework assume a pointed significance.

Theories in casework can neither be overemphasized nor can be underemphasized. Theories help an individual to handle the client in the way that is best suited to the client's needs and conditions. Theories form the supportive structure, providing a sense of intellectual and emotional security to the professional practitioners besides giving them directions and ability to predict outcomes. The essence embodied in theories is not just the knowledge for the sake of it, but knowledge that enriches and empowers practice.

5.2 EXISTENTIAL THEORY

The key points of the existential theory are the following:

1. The human being is not just an existing entity, he is also capable of being aware of his existence, and of imparting meaning to his existence.
2. External forces can be vicious and menacing; but the assumption that the human beings inevitably become victims to these inimical forces is not acceptable. There is within every person the potential for transcending external circumstances. From this point of view, men and women are creators of their personalities, though they are partly creatures of their circumstances as well.
3. Every person is a being, in the process of becoming, indicating that there are static and dynamic aspects of his / her acceptance. Understanding the person implies that the one who is in the process of understanding, experiences through his/her observation, imagination and thinking, the static and dynamic aspects of the other person, in his/her here-and-now-living. Understanding is both an intellectual and emotional process, whereas explanation is an intellectual process, without any emotional underpinnings.
4. Freedom is not a license to do everything that one wants to do, but it is right that has to be used consciously and responsibly. For many people, the idea of responsibility is missing from their concept of freedom as a right, with the result that, they create problems of social functioning.

Existential casework is geared to following goals:

- **Helping the process of disillusionment:** A person who has wrong assumptions about the self and the others have to go through a process of disillusionment about the self in relation to the problem. Even when the objective fact is established that the client's problem is mainly because of his / her doings, the client is most likely to deny this and may blame others or the environment. Disillusionment here means knowing how the problem has been caused through one's deeds of commissions and omissions. Knowing one's true self is an uncomfortable process and therefore, the social worker's involvement through application of the emotional support and other counselling techniques is necessary.
- **Confronting the client with the freedom to act appropriately and responsibly:** The client is encouraged to use his / her will to rise above his / her instinctual forces in situations where s/he has been a slave to the instinctual demands. This could have been a process of repetitive submission that has adversely affected his / her social functioning. To illustrate, an alcoholic has to choose his freedom to refuse alcohol if he wants to get over his problem of alcoholism. It would mean accepting the anxiety and the tension as facts of

existence, and deciding to handle such facts of life through thinking and acting responsibly instead of seeking a temporary escape through alcohol.

- **Helping the client to make a commitment to the task of changing old habit:** With some knowledge of the self as it actually is, unfettered by the distorted images, the next step for the client is to use his / her will to make a decision to change the unhelpful behaviour. Changing one's behaviour, like any other achievement, needs step to step onward movement in the form of new thinking and doing. As a distant goal not achievable in a day or two, it requires patient plodding day by day, for which a commitment – both mental and emotional – is necessary. The social worker provides help by suggesting assignments for the client and constantly motivating him / her to carry out the assignments.

5.3 COGNITIVE THEORY

The major theme of this theory is centred on the concept of thinking. An individual's thinking is shaped by his/her society and the immediate environment and the thinking determines behaviour. Emotions are set to proceed from his / her thinking. If the social functioning of an individual is different than the accepted norms, it would mean that his / her thinking needs to be modified to change behaviour, the mode of thinking has to change. Cognitive theory also lays stress on the idea that human beings have latent creative resources which are available for use in effecting changes in goals and behaviour.

Albert Ellis, a psychotherapist has developed an easily comprehensible system of cognitive theory under the label of '**rational emotive therapy**'. According to Ellis, some ideas are irrational which are held as rational by people who are thus affected unfavourably by these ideas. Some of these irrational ideas are:

- 1) It is necessary for an individual to be loved and approved by all in all situations.
- 2) It is *horrible* or *terrible* when things do not go according to one's plan.
- 3) Feelings are caused by external forces and one has no control over them.
- 4) What affects one's life adversely once is going to do so for the rest of one's life.
- 5) It is a great tragedy if one can not achieve one's goals.

As against these five irrational ideas, there are corresponding rational ideas. They are:

- 1) It is not humanly possible to be loved and approved by all in every situation.
- 2) Nothing is *horrible* or *terrible*; things may rather be inconvenient or bothersome. When things do not happen according to the plan, one can still put up with things as they are.
- 3) Feelings are caused by one's thinking and hence controllable.
- 4) The impact of an event can not be everlasting. The impact of bad events can be transformed by using the situation as a learning experience.

- 5) It hurts if one does not achieve one's goals, but it is not a tragedy. The feeling of hurt can be changed through thinking.

Cognitive / Rational emotive Therapy includes four stages:

- 1) *Presentation of Rationale*
The worker attempts to elicit the problem or significance of self statements in general without mentioning the client's problem.
- 2) *Overview of Irrational Assumption*
The worker presents a number of irrational self-statements before the client and tries to make the client realize that his / her statements are irrational.
- 3) *Analysis of Client's Problem in Rational Emotive Terms*
Client is made aware of his / her problem rationally and is provided with the knowledge of how s/he has labeled the event.
- 4) *Teaching the Client to Modify Internal Statements*
The client is taught to change his /her opinions and attitudes which are anxiety producing.

In the helping process the social caseworker uses modeling to convey to the client, continuously, the message of rationality in thinking and speaking. Worker helps the client to be as rational as possible in his / her behaviour and to see the irrationalities that one sees around and is unable to change. Clients are trained to use words judiciously so that, unfavourable events may not provoke intense feelings. The judicious use of language means that by describing events with the use of words that symbolize a moderate level of feelings, instead of words that indicate vehemence, one can avoid and the damaging effect of strong feelings. Feelings are to be perceived as derivatives of thinking. Thus by viewing unpleasant events and situations in a balanced way, without mentally exaggerating their significance, one is able to control one's feelings instead of being controlled by them.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) What are the key points of existential theory?

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- 2) What are the various stages of cognitive theory?

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5.4 BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION THEORY

The basic theme in this approach is that behavioural problem is mainly the result of previous learning and that some problems are caused by contemporary events and some by physiological factors. Dealing with the physiological factors does not lie within the professional purview of social workers. The behaviouristic theory viewed problem as essentially the result of a failure to learn necessary adaptive behaviours and the competencies and / or the learning of ineffective and maladaptive behaviours. It may happen due to conflicting situations that require the individual to make discriminations or decisions of which he / she feels incapable. The maladjusted person has learned the faulty coping patterns, which are being maintained by some kind of reinforcement, and he / she has failed to learn competencies for coping with the problem of living.

- **Classical conditioning**

Certain conditions elicit specific responses from living organism. To illustrate, when food is placed in front of a dog, the dog salivates. If the food appears every time with the ringing of the bell, then after a considerable number of experiences of the food and the bell occurring together, the dog salivates even if only the bell ring and food is absent. The ringing of the bell is the conditional stimulus associated with the unconditional stimulus, food. Similarly, people react in certain ways as a result of conditional stimuli that are associated originally in some way or the other, with unconditional stimuli.

- **Instrumental conditioning**

The central idea is that, what a person does in a particular situation brings consequences, which subsequently set a pattern of his / her behaviour. The consequence is perceived by the person as a reward for which she / he repeats the behaviour. To illustrate, a man is forced by his peer group to take alcohol for the first time. Alcohol gives him pleasurable sensation – a little relaxation and elation. Subsequently, the man takes alcohol just for the associated pleasure and it is likely that he may get habituated to drinking and later become an alcoholic as more and more alcohol will be required to produce desirable sensations as the time passes.

- **Observational learning**

Here, the learner is the observer for whom there is a model to copy from – a model who has status, power or wealth. Some aspects of the model's behaviour are likely to be imitated by the observer who wishes to be like the model. Children often learn verbal and physical aggression through their observation of significant adults in their life.

- **Contemporary events**

Contemporary events, most of which relate to environmental facts, can cause problematic behaviour. For example, stressful situations can give rise to anxiety, anger, panic or similar feelings. Individuals behave in unacceptable manner when they are driven by such feelings.

The direct way of helping the clients would involve weakening the process of learning problematic behaviour and strengthening the process of learning desirable behaviour. It is important to identify the stimuli that produce or reinforce undesirable

behaviour and then to remove these stimuli. Factors that act as stimuli for reinforcing desirable behaviour should be strengthened. Rewards may be used to motivate clients to develop acceptable forms of behaviour. In the contemporary scenario the need is for the environmental modification to remove or reduce the effects of damaging factors. The technique has been found effective with reference to clients suffering from abnormal fears about routine things.

5.5 PROBLEM SOLVING APPROACH

This approach stands on the recognition that life is an ongoing problem encountering – and – problem solving process. At any point of time, every person is involved in coping with his / her problems. Sometimes s/he is capable of coping and sometimes fails to resolve the crisis situation. Through problem solving process, the individual or the family is helped to cope with or resolve some difficulty that he / she is currently finding difficult to solve. Thus the primary goal of problem solving is to help a person to cope as effectively as possible with such problems in carrying social tasks.

In the initial phase attempts are made to engage the client with his / her problems and to do something about it in a working relationship with the agency. The problem solving starts at once, from the first movement with treating the person. The client is not treated for his / her problem but he/she is treated for the purpose of helping him/her to know his/her that is strength and weaknesses and how to remove these weaknesses.

In short, the problem solving approach involves the following steps:

- 1) It tries to release, energize and gives directions to the client's motivation for change.
- 2) It tries to release and exercise the client's mental, emotional and action capacities for coping with the problem.
- 3) It tries to find and make accessible to the client such aids and resources as are necessary to the solution of the problem.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) What are the various steps in problem solving approach?

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- 2) Explain the experiment of classical conditioning in the behaviour modification approach.

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5.6 ECLECTIC APPROACH

It has been observed that no theoretical approach explains human behaviour in a conclusive manner. Therefore it is important to develop an eclectic approach, an approach that is characterized by a solid knowledge of many systems of theories and a skill for selecting useful concepts and techniques with reference to clients.

Eclecticism does not mean that the social worker chooses casually a methodology of explanation. Eclecticism, on the other hand, means choosing a methodology purposefully with explainable reasons and with reference to a particular client, or clients. Every school of thought has its own strengths and limitations. The social worker's skill will be that of taking advantage of the strengths without ignoring the drawbacks in relation to the client.

Cognitive theory has some things in common related to thinking and they are useful to client whose faculty of thinking can be activated. Those clients who hold some form of religious philosophy may be benefited from existential theory. By knowing the theories well and understanding the clients adequately, it is possible to use theories appropriately and effectively.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) Explain why Eclectic approach is considered to be the best way of understanding the human behaviour?

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5.7 LET US SUM UP

There is a great diversity in the casework theory. This diversity would encourage intellectual debates, clashes of ideas that would result in rigorous practice and research efforts based on specification of the general aspects and tangible utility of several theories.

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