Reflective Analysis of Role Play

[Author Name(s), First M. Last, Omit Titles and Degrees]

[Institutional Affiliation(s)]

Author Note

[Include any grant/funding information and a complete correspondence address.]

Reflective Analysis of Role Play

# Introduction

A diverse range of professional, social, emotional, and cognitive skills are required for social work. It seems to be a simple task, but it is a complex thing to do. A social worker possesses many skills and needs to become a life-long learner, helper, and communicator. Social work is a challenging task in which the social worker is responsible for helping families, individuals, and other groups of people in different matters of their lives (Karpetis, 2017).

Haseeb is acting as a social worker in the video. He has created an appropriate environment and communicated to the woman following the code of ethics and core values. He has interviewed a woman seventy-two years old. The woman is a widow who spent thirty years of her life with her husband in a farmhouse, quite away from the city. After the death of her husband, her children forced her to be settled with them in the city as she was left alone on the farm. The woman is facing difficulty in adapting to the new environment. She is feeling depressed and isolated. Haseeb tries to help her by interviewing her and discussing all her problems and difficulties making a comparison of her life at the farmhouse and in the city.

**Skills used by the Social Worker**

A social worker has many qualities and skills that he uses to bring peace and justice to the society. A social worker should be an active listener, a critical thinker, and an empathic person. He should be tolerant enough to listen to the other person carefully and patiently. Moreover, he should have the ability to communicate effectively in various ways. Communication is an essential skill in every field of life. It is the most important thing in helping others to cope with their problems (Dunk-West, 2018). He should be able to gather a lot of information about the individual and his physical, mental, emotional, social, and environmental life. A healthy balance of relationship between the worker and his client should be created by setting boundaries. It proves to be helpful in establishing and maintaining professional relationships without any emotional stress (Rothman, 2018). A social worker is the voice of his clients. Advocacy should be used which means speaking out or acting out for the benefit of clients. Social workers should advocate new programs or expand current programs for the best interest of their clients to bring positive changes in the lives of people (Berzin, Singer, & Chan, n.d.). Clients with several issues and problems approach the social workers. It is one of the major qualities of a social worker that he can understand and solve conflict solutions. He should show a high level of responsibility while dealing with such cases. His courage and passion for work prove to be helpful in handling such conflict and complex situations (Howe, 2017).

Haseeb acted as a social worker and tried to use all the skills effectively. Haseeb is an active listener as he gave full attention to everything that the woman in the video said. He developed an effective communication with the woman by making her feel comfortable in the environment. He had prepared questions that were related to the past experiences of the woman in her farmhouse and her present experiences in the city. While the woman answered, he carefully noted down every necessary detail so that it could be analyzed further, and it even gave the woman an impression that her life events and problems are important to her social worker. Haseeb also showed empathy towards the woman and tried to tell her ways to cope up with the issues she had faced and is facing in her life. In the beginning of the video when Haseeb introduced himself and asked the woman’s name, on her answer he praised her name in a sweet and friendly way, “Oh Kath, that’s beautiful name.” This shows that he was trying to make the woman feel comfortable during the discussion. It is very important to make the subject feel relaxed in front of the social worker, as he needs to have a proper communication regarding the person’s issues (G. Reamer, 2015). It can be seen in the video that this sentence said by Haseeb made the woman feel more confident and comfortable. Social workers use such attitudes to build confidence in the clients so that they interact comfortably during the session.

An interactive session can only take place when the subject gives appropriate and honest answers to the social worker. This can only be possible when the person trusts the social worker, only then he would give honest answers to the questions asked. Haseeb was able to build trust in the woman as the video shows that he assured that the information told by the woman would be confidential and it would be used just to analyze her problems so that some solutions can be suggested. As Haseeb says, "Before we proceed, I am going to inform you that the information you are going to share with me that is... that will be totally confidential because I am social worker and you are my client so ethically that's my responsibility and that you don't need to worry about that one. That will be totally confidential and I am also making some notes that will be helpful for me and later on I will discuss with you." The social worker is newly introduced to the client which makes it difficult for the client to trust the stranger easily. People hesitate to tell their personal experiences to the social workers but if the worker builds a relationship of trust in his client, things become very smooth and the discussion becomes easygoing. In this interview, Haseeb builds his trust with the woman and she tells him all the required details about her past and present life. He asks the woman about her life at the farm, her life in the city, her husband, her kids, her issues with the environmental changes, and the woman without any hesitation answers all. This trust-building is very important and useful in every problem-solving case. Since the social worker would not know about the details of the client and his life, he would not be able to analyze the case and look for appropriate solutions.

Empathy refers to the emotions and feelings of the social worker towards the problems of the client. When the social worker thinks emotionally by imagining himself at the place of his client to analyze his issues and problems carefully. This helps in problem solving, as the worker gets involved in the client's situation through imagination and feel how the client might be feeling (Stanley, Mettilda Buvaneswari, & Meenakshi, 2018). Haseeb shows the feelings of empathy towards the woman in this video. He maintains eye contact with the woman throughout the video listening to her carefully and paying attention to the information told by her. When the woman tells that, she spent a good time at the farm because it was a hilly area and she likes hilly areas Haseeb says, "Oh! Yeah, yeah! I also like hilly areas." The woman's reaction after hearing this can be seen in the video, as it is clear that she felt happy upon hearing that the social worker interviewing her also has the same interest as she has.

Haseeb has used an effective communication with the woman. Throughout the conversation, he kept showing interest in the woman’s information, which encouraged the woman to engage in the discussion more confidently. A good eye contact was maintained by the social worker, the questions that he had prepared were also appropriate and it let the speaker express her views, opinions, and feelings confidently and easily. At every answer given by the woman, Haseeb gave related expressions, sometimes through smiles, sometimes through giggling, and at other times through short phrases like “Yeah” “Good” “Very good” “Oh” “Ok” “Alright.” These expressions give an impression to the speaker that the social worker is listening to him/her carefully and he has an interest in helping the individual solve his/her problems.

Identification of complex problems and finding appropriate and helpful suggestions for them is an important skill of a social worker. He should be a complex problem solver as he works for the benefit and improvement of the society. In this video, Haseeb has proposed effective problem-solving techniques to help the woman cope up with her isolation and depression. The woman expresses her problem that her body conditions are not adapting to the new environment due to which she suffered from fever twice in the previous two months. Haseeb listened to this issue very attentively and communicated through expression during the whole discussion. At the end, he gave a card to the woman saying, "If you don't mind I give you a card and this is the detail card so you can contact them regarding your health issues and if you face some problem so you can contact me I will help you also." This is how he helped her regarding her health issues. The woman also tells that she does not know any of the places or clubs where she can interact with new people and try to make new friends. Haseeb solves this problem as well by saying, "Yeah there's a lot of communities- social communities and social community clubs which help the people, especially old peoples and don't worry about that one. I will check all of that then I will discuss with you…" Here he solves the mental or psychological problems that the woman is dealing with. The problem-solving technique of Haseeb solved the physical, mental, emotional, and social problems that the woman was facing in her life.

**Areas where improvement is required**

Haseeb has tried to communicate and solve the problems of the woman effectively. He possesses skills and qualities of a social worker such as empathy, flexibility, respect, trust and confidence building, effective communication, etc., but some of the things need to be improved to make him a more skilled social worker. He followed all the core values and principles required for the problem solving and help of his client. There was an appropriate atmosphere; he made the client comfortable, built his trust to make her feel confident and showed empathy towards her issues. All these led to a healthy discussion between the two and the worker was able to give good suggestions for her problem solving after she answered everything that was asked. However, there was a lack of organization in the discussion. Haseeb had prepared very good questions to ask, but the interview was not organized. One question was asked from the past and the very next moment a question related to the future was asked. Though this sometimes proves to be effective as the person goes into a stream of consciousness and easily relates past experiences to the present ones, but for the people like Kath who are already going through depression and isolation, this technique creates confusion and the person is not able to discuss further. Another major improvement that is required in the skills of Haseeb is the use of language. His speech was not organized; there were a lot of mistakes in his use of language which the woman might not be able to understand properly. The use of tenses and appropriate verbs is very important so that the listener understands the discussion or questions and is able to answer properly. Haseeb asked many questions that were incorrect such as, "When did you partner passed away?" "How you manage your farm after demised of your husband?" "What are the your main interest and hobbies?" "What was the main thing that push you to move in town and left your farm and move here?" "Have you facing any health issue?" "Did you found any social place in the town?" This inappropriate use of language make the other person unable to understand the conveyed message or the asked question. Haseeb needs to improve his communication skills as communication holds great importance while interviewing the client and solving his or her problems. If the client of Haseeb would not have been able to understand his questions, there interview would have been wasted and he would have been unable to suggest any solutions for her problem solving. The data also needs to be organized as it is mentioned above that Haseeb’s information and questions were appropriate and helpful, but they were not organized properly. If his client had been confused, she would not have been able to give all the answers or remain engaged in the conversation with him. A social worker’s job is very important in the lives of other people to live and progress in the society, therefore, the skills of the social worker should be used affectively and helpfully.

***Critical Self-reflection***

Critical self-reflection is very important in every task as it helps the individual develop his skills and question his progress positively so that it can be decided how it could be made better in future. My role-play as a social worker was a mixture of good and bad. I performed very well, while a few of the things need a lot of improvement in order to become a good social worker in few things. Social work requires many skills and qualities such as empathy, patience, trust, organization, objectivity, persistence, flexibility, and effective communication skills (Kapoulitsas & Corcoran, 2015). I developed a good communication with my client from the beginning of the video. After she told me her name, I praised her name that made her feel confident during the session. I also asked if she had any difficulty reaching my place, which showed my concern and made her feel that she could rely on me. Throughout the conversation, I listened to her attentively and carefully, which I showed by maintaining eye contact with her and giving expressions on every information she gave. A social worker should show feelings of respect towards the dignity of the client (Oxhandler, Parrish, Torres, & Achenbaum, 2015). I was successful in this area as I showed full respect and dedication towards her dignity. Trust is the major thing that needs to be built while such discussions as the client should be able to answer every question and deliver all information without any doubt of having the information leaked by the worker. I built my trust in the woman by assuring her that whatever she tells me would remain between us and it is being written only because of further discussions on solving her problems. I showed empathy to my client, which created a feeling of confidence and trust in her. I expressed that I can understand her pain and issues. I was patient and flexible throughout the discussion, and I let her speak and listened to her calmly. While discussing about her social inactiveness she showed me a feeling of fear and lack of confidence by asking if the people in the social club would have the same interests as she has. I felt a feeling of nervousness in her, which I controlled by saying that I would look for clubs and would introduce her to people who have the same interests and hobbies like her. It made her much relaxed and all the nervousness that I saw on her face was gone. This was an effective thing to do because she was showing lack of confidence and hesitation in interacting with some new fellows.

My organization of data was not up to the mark as I was unable to organize data and ask questions related to the past first, then related to the present. My client could have got confused because of this but thankfully, she was able to answer the questions carefully. However, this needs to be avoided in future so that my clients do not get confused while discussion (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). Another area for improvement is my inappropriate use of language structures. There were many structural and grammatical mistakes in my speech that should be avoided as it makes the client unable to understand the exact meaning of what the worker is trying to ask. Maximum self-determination should be fostered in the clients, as it is the main aim of social work and the major responsibility of the social worker. However, I was unable to properly foster self-determination in my client. Instead of giving suggestions, I was making her rely on me. I provided her with a card for the medical center and even told her that she can use my reference in the hospital. Also asking about her social life, I told her that I would look for some social clubs for her. I would have let her find new things, new places, and new people by herself. This would create confidence and self-dependence in her and she would have come out of her isolation (George, 2015). Decision-making is also useful for every individual. Whether a person is in depression, or excitement, happy or sad, he should be able to make his own decisions according to his interests and needs. I would have prepared some questions that would clear whether my client is able to make her decision herself. It would have been helpful for her self-reflection and for my study and analysis as well. In other words, I was lacking confidence that made me uncertain of what I can and what I should do (De Jong & Miller, 1995).

**Conclusion**

Social work is not a process, rather it is an art or a skill helpful for people in strengthening their future and making them able to come out of the crisis they are facing in life (Paul, 2018). Some of the qualities that asocial worker should have are already possessed by some people for example sometimes a person is naturally empathic or flexible. Such people can understand the feelings of others very well; still these qualities need to be practiced. A social worker is a very important part of the society as he is responsible for the issues caused by domestic violence, abuse, parental substance abuse, and neglect. They even deal with people suffering from mental, emotional, or psychological issues. It is an important commitment and a challenging job that requires a great deal of physical, mental, and emotional energy (Baldwin, 2016).

***References***

Baldwin, M. (2016). Social Work, Critical Reflection and the Learning Organization. Routledge.

Berzin, S. C., Singer, J., & Chan, C. (n.d.). Practice Innovation through Technology in the Digital Age: A Grand Challenge for Social Work. 24.

De Jong, P., & Miller, S. D. (1995). How to Interview for Client Strengths. Social Work, 40(6), 729–736. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/40.6.729

Dunk-West, P. (2018). HOW TO BE A SOCIAL WORKER - PRISCILLA DUNK-WEST - Google Books. Retrieved from https://books.google.com.pk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=9kJmDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=how+does+a+social+worker+help+people+fight+depression&ots=3Ib4Ky\_cZ\_&sig=S-LkByapR2MnpSJnpEnILsN2lIQ#v=onepage&q=how%20does%20a%20social%20worker%20help%20people%20fight%20depression&f=false

G. Reamer, F. (2015). Clinical Social Work in a Digital Environment: Ethical and Risk-Management Challenges | SpringerLink. Springer Link, 43(2), 120–132.

George, L. J. (2015). Working with Norms in Social Work Practice: Introjection, Discipline, and Self-Determination. Psychoanalytic Social Work, 22(2), 108–125. https://doi.org/10.1080/15228878.2015.1012682

Howe, D. (2017). An Introduction to Social Work Theory. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315262659

Kapoulitsas, M., & Corcoran, T. (2015). Compassion fatigue and resilience: A qualitative analysis of social work practice. Qualitative Social Work, 14(1), 86–101. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325014528526

Karpetis, G. (2017). (PDF) Social Work Skills: A Narrative Review of the Literature. Retrieved October 11, 2019, from Research Gate website: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318796235\_Social\_Work\_Skills\_A\_Narrative\_Review\_of\_the\_Literature

Oxhandler, H. K., Parrish, D. E., Torres, L. R., & Achenbaum, W. A. (2015). The Integration of Clients’ Religion and Spirituality in Social Work Practice: A National Survey. Social Work, 60(3), 228–237. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swv018

Paul, R. W. (2018, October 24). Critical Thinking and the Critical Person. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315802015-27

Rothman, J. (2018). Social Work Practice Across Disability. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315178028

Stanley, S., Mettilda Buvaneswari, G., & Meenakshi, A. (2018). Predictors of empathy in women social workers. Journal of Social Work, 1468017318794280. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468017318794280

Yahaya, R., & Ebrahim, F. (2016). Leadership styles and organizational commitment: literature review. Journal of Management Development. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-01-2015-0004