Reflective Analysis of Social Work

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**Introduction**

Social work is a noble cause; it is used to heal wounds and help people in distress. Many people in this world opt for social work as a profession, like doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists and many others, whereas some people go for social work as volunteers, just for the satisfaction of self and to find peace. The perfect example in this context is the volunteers who work free of cost or without any demands for different NGOs or organizations. Social work involves promoting human rights, solving problems, providing empowerment, enhancing well-being, bringing social justice, initiating social change and liberation (O'Connor, 2015).

Social work is not an easy job, in fact, it one of the hardest jobs on the plant. It requires a great level of knowledge and experience in order to provide the best level of service that is the demand for this job. According to the researchers and experts, a high level of expertise is required to provide satisfaction and the peace to the subjects, which is the intent of this profession. It focuses on the elimination of negativity and spreading positivity all around. The primary job of a social worker is to protect and shield vulnerable people and take them out of troublesome situations. Social workers can be found in multiple fields like health, education, social justice, safety and security. It can be clearly seen that how important communication skills, especially interpersonal communication skills, pose to be for a profession of a social worker, as they have to focus on developing social relations, which is impossible without expertise in interpersonal communications.

In order to analyze my core skills required for social work, I and one of my friends, Rashid, engaged in a role play. We both took the roles of interviewer and interviewee. I was the interviewer or and Rashid was the interviewee. It was more of a kind of psychologist and the client discussion session. He was supposed to play the role of a person in distress, who is facing multiple issues at his workplace and has consulted a psychologist or a social worker to help him out. The overall purpose of the role play was to showcase that how exactly a social worker helps a person come out of their current situation of mental or physical tension and tries to relieve their pain by proving different solutions.

**Discussion**

Multiple sets of skills are required by an individual in order to become a perfect social worker. Some of these skills are physical in nature like physical strength but mostly, they are of mental or cognitive in nature. These cognitive skills include communication and analytical abilities so that a social worker can truly connect to the cause and the person they are helping.

After a self-analysis or a critical reflection over my own role play, I found out some areas that were perfectly fine and no improvement was required in them. I only need to polish these skills in order to attain perfection in them and get the maximum benefit out of them. Contrary to this, there are some areas or skills, on which I need to focus to bring an improvement in them in order to communicate better with the subjects and make them feel more connected. These have been described below.

**Examples of Skills Used**

**Information Giving- Handling of Privacy**

Confidentiality or privacy is the core of social work. The social worker or the helper should make the subject at ease that his or her information is completely safe with him (social worker) and the subject does not need to worry about it at all. It is not only a verbal surety but also a moral duty of the social worker to ensure that the data and information of the subject will remain completely safe and private with the social worker (Parrott, 2014). Considering the current roleplay, the interviewer (which is me) ensures the interviewee or the subject about the protection of the data that is being recorded either virtually or in the form of notes will be kept completely safe with the interviewer. This shows a high level of skill exhibited by the social worker.

**Reflective Listening**

Another important part of social work is reflective listening. A person who intends to help someone or take someone out of a depressing situation should actively practice reflective listening. They should listen carefully to the matter and then repeat the issue to the speaker to emphasize it and confirm from the speaker that whether that the issue has been understood in the right context (Weger Jr., Castle Bell, Minei, & Robinson, 2014). The same is being practised in the current roleplay under discussion. The interviewer listens to an issue from the speaker and then repeats it to confirm form him that whether he has taken the thing in the right perspective.

**Engagement Skills**

A successful and experienced social worker engages the subjects in the helping process and lets them participate completely in the whole course. This gives a sense of empowerment to the subject and they feel valued (Rubin, & Babbie, 2016). In the role play being discussed, it can be seen evidently that the social worker is encouraging the interviewer to participate and engage actively in the discussion process. The interviewer is constantly urging the interviewee (in a positive manner) to open up and tell more about the issue he is facing. It is a very positive quality and a sign of a well-experienced social worker.

**Empathy**

Empathy is one of the core values that form the basis of a healthy and successful social work. Empathy refers to the ability to understand the situation form the other person's perspective, especially from the perspective of a person in trouble or pain (Davis, 2018). If a social worker does not have empathy, he or she cannot claim to be providing the best level of services. It can be seen in the role play that the social worker is showing a high level of empathy as he constantly assures the subject that he is understanding the situation he is in.

**Areas of improvement for application of social work core interpersonal communication and helping skills**

**Background Information**

The background information holds great importance while solving many issues providing services as a social worker. The background information or the basic information like family history and the origin or the subject help significantly in understanding the nature of the issue in a more precise and appropriate way. Usually, the background information part comes in the very beginning of the session or interview as it paves the way for better comprehension of the further details. In my opinion, in this roleplay or interview, the social worker should have paid a little more attention to the background information of the subject. Although he has asked a little bit about the subject’s roots and basic information I find it a little insufficient to comprehend the further details of the issue.

**Depth of the Issue**

One of the major duties of a social worker is to probe the subject (in a comfortable way) and go to the depths of the issue so that it can be comprehended in a more appropriate way. This practice significantly helps in providing a solution to the problem in a much better and efficient way. I found a little bit of lagging regarding this aspect in the current roleplay. The interviewer, although elaborated the interview in a very good manner and got the information out of the interviewee in a very skilful way, did not focus on the “exact” comment about which the subject was distressed. The subject informed that he was disturbed because one of his senior colleagues passed a comment on his physical appearance, so the next question of the social worker should have been that can the subject share the exact comment with him, about which he is disturbed if he feels comfortable, but the question never came.

**Critical Reflection on Role Play**

After reflecting over my own role play as a social worker or advisor to a person in problem, I found out much useful information, which could indicate that I can be a very good social worker. On the other hand, I also noticed some loopholes, that need to be rectified, in order to get maximum perfection in communicating as a skilled social worker. I am listing down all these areas as under from the eyes of a third person.

**Areas That Seem Fine**

**Starting of the Interview**

The starting or the interview or session was pretty good. The interviewer greeted the subject in a very positive way. His greeting was warm and accompanied by a welcoming smile. He also asked the subject about his health and if he faced any difficulty finding the location of the office. Moreover, assured the sufferer that his information will be kept completely safe and private. This made the subject or interviewee very comfortable and made him share his problem in a much-relaxed manner.

**Confidentiality**

It has already been established that confidentiality is an essential aspect of social work. A social worker needs to keep the information shared by his clients or subjects confidential in all conditions and make sure that this data does not leak out in any circumstances, until unless the subject allows doing so. One of the very positive things that were noticed in this interview or the role play was that the social worker assured the interviewee in the very beginning that his information that he shares in this session will be kept in locks and he does not need to worry about this. His style was very re-assuring with made the subject much comfortable in the session.

**Active Listening**

Active listening is also an integral component of social work. If a social worker listens actively to the issue of the victim, he or she will be in a much better position to solve their problem (Brownell, 2015). It has been observed that the social worker is demonstrating a high level of active listening during this roleplay session. He is attentively listening to whatever the other person is saying and ensuring that he is understanding each and everything thing he is saying. This builds up the confidence of the subject and encourages them to put in more information in the session.

**Empathy**

Empathy and social work go side by side; without empathy, social work is nothing. Empathy works as a backbone of social work (Gerdes, & Segal, 2011). This current role-play session was laden with the values of selflessness and empathy. The interviewer or the person conducting the session was exhibiting a commendable level of empathy as he was repeatedly uttering the words “I understand” and “I can understand” which showed that he can relate with the issue of the sufferer. It is also very helpful in booting up the confidence level of the subject and they feel more encouraged to share their problem(s)

**Termination of the Interview**

The termination or the ending of the interview was also done on a very professional and helping note. It is very important that the subject feels comfortable and encouraged throughout the discussion session related to social work, not only in the beginning or during the session. The role play under discussion was excellent in this respect. The social worker exhibited a great level of professionalism and interpersonal communication skills even at the end of the interview. He kept the same smile and warmth even at the end of the session and assured the client that he will get back to him with a positive response. It proved to be very helpful as the subject feels positive and leaves the interview on a positive note as well.

**Areas That Need A Little Improvement**

**Chance to Participate**

In a social work setup, any interview or session is not successful until the subject is allowed and encouraged to participate to the full extent in the process. The social worker should act more as a listener and try to grab as many details from the discussions as he or she could.Considering the current roleplay session, I feel that the subject should have got a little more chance to participate. Although the person who is conducting the session or the social worker is being very helpful and empathetic towards the victim, he (the subject) should have been given a little more chance to speak, so he can elaborate his problems in a more detailed and specific manner.

**Suggestions and Recommendations**

Any session, discussion or interview, especially in the field of social work is incomplete without the inclusion of suggestions and recommendations. The part of suggestions usually comes at the end of the session and often consists of a variety of recommendations and possible solutions discussed in the whole session. The recommendation section of the interview normally leads towards the termination of discussion. Keeping the current discussion session between a distressed person and a social worker, I feel like there is still a little bit more space for the possible solutions to the issue. Although the social worker tries to help the sufferer to his best and provides quick fixes to him as resolutions to his problems there could be more. Instead of just saying that I will refer you to some good institutes where your issue can be resolved the social worker should have provided some suggestions at the first level.

**Conclusions**

In short, it can be concluded that, as a whole, the role play session or the interview was very good. There was a complete demonstration of interpersonal and helping skills from the person playing the role of the social worker. He demonstrated both the skills of active listening as well as reflective listening; he ensured complete confidentiality to the subject and most of all he exhibited empathy towards the interviewee, making him believe that he completely understands all the situation through which the subject is going through. Although the role play session was much elaborated and well designed, there are little loopholes, which if corrected, can make the session much better and more productive. First of all, less focus was paid on the background information part. Moreover, the person playing the part of the social worker did not focus on the specific details, he just asked focused on getting the information in a general manner. Overall, the role play was a good attempt and covered most of the interpersonal communication and helping skills that a good social worker should have.

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