

MODERN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Mark Doel and Steven M Shardlow¹

INTRODUCTION

We published *Social Work Practice: activities and exercises for training and developing social workers* in 1993. This ring-binder of materials and supporting literature was based on our combined experience of teaching social work students in class and practice settings, as well as developing and leading many courses for practice teachers. The book was well received and in 1998 we updated it, and published it in bound form, as *The New Social Work Practice*. This book had the same interactive style as the 1993 book, but we brought the content up to date with new chapters, exercises and activities.

We hope that you will enjoy using the latest version, *Modern Social Work Practice*, which is largely re-written. It uses the same style as its forebears, but we realized that the rewriting meant that a number of exercises and activities which featured in the previous books would be no longer available to our readers. It is for this reason that we decided to establish this website, from which you can download copies of many of these exercises, along with the supporting introductions with ideas about how they might be used.

You may use these activities freely and may reproduce them in paper form provided that the authors and source are acknowledged. Electronic reproduction is not permitted without the prior agreement of the authors.

We will from time to time add activities and exercises, and would be pleased to hear from you about how you use and adapt them - practice teachers, assessors, tutors and students alike. Let us know how you get on.

Professor Mark Doel
Sheffield Hallam University
(m.doel@shu.ac.uk)

Professor Steven Shardlow
University of Salford
(s.m.shardlow@salford.ac.uk)

Exercises and activities available at this site:

Each activity relates to a particular aspect of practice.

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Anti-discriminatory Practice	Fruit Salad!
Assumptions - making them explicit	Left-Hand Column
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Comparative Social Work	Gulliver's Travels
Culturally Competent Practice	You Are What You Eat
Empowering Practice	Steps
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Evaluating Practice	Mapping the Work

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Family-Centre Practice	Whanau
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Supervision and Reflective Practice	Reflections on Supervision
Workload Management	Perfect Timing
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Advocacy **IN MY VIEW**

INTRODUCTION

In my view presents seven possible 'hidden agendas' at a hospital ward round. The student wants to advocate for the client to return to his home, but each hidden agenda might explain the other professionals' involved in the ward round reluctance to accept the student's view. The activity helps students to practise whether and how they might open up the hidden agendas.

Purpose

This chapter helps students to learn how to express their views clearly and how to work with other people's agendas, when these are in conflict with their own.

The term *advocacy skills* is often used to refer to the practitioner's work on behalf of the client. In this activity we use the word advocacy to mean the skills of expressing your own view, even when it comes into conflict with the views of other people. The expressed views may, indeed, be on behalf of a client. This activity helps students to learn how to advocate both for their clients and for their own purposes.

Method

Both you and the student read *In my view* in preparation for the practice tutorial. You each agree to prepare a short, verbal summary of the hidden agenda items, taking three or four each (ward round politics, and so on.) (About 20 minutes)

In the practice tutorial, you and the student present the prepared verbal summary of each hidden agenda item, *as though you are speaking to the ward round*. You discuss the merits and problems of each item after it has been presented, and consider in what circumstances you would actually open that particular agenda item. (About 1 hour).

Finally, the student makes a priority list of the hidden agenda items, based on those items the student considers are most likely to help them advocate for their view that the client should return home. Which items, if any, does the student feel should remain hidden? (About 20 minutes).

Variations

You might want to adapt *In my view* to your own setting. However, as with *Inquiry* (Modern Social Work Practice 2005), the case material is used as a hanger for the learning points, so it is not important for the student to be familiar with the case material itself.

Situations may have occurred in the student's own practice which relate to *In my view*. The activities in this book serve as simulations of direct practice, so they can be followed at a pace which promotes the student's learning. Although the pace may be slower than live practice (because you can stop and start and re-run simulated situations), paradoxically this can *accelerate* the student's learning. It is important, however, that the learning which takes place in simulated conditions is tested in live conditions. You need to look for examples in students' direct practice which illustrate the learning they have experienced in simulated practice (Doel and Shardlow, 1996b).

Advocacy

IN MY VIEW Activity

Mr Sahid is seventy-two and he is a patient at St Francis' General Hospital. He was admitted to Ward 14 two weeks ago after he was found on the floor at home; he had fallen and injured his thigh, and when admitted to the hospital it seemed that he had been neglecting himself. He was widowed last year and his only son lives in a distant town, with the care of a disabled daughter. Mr Sahid speaks faltering English and it is necessary to be patient when conversing with him. At the previous ward round, it was clear that most people were advocating that Mr Sahid should remain in hospital and that a place in residential care should be sought. You are of the opinion that Mr Sahid could return home, with domiciliary services, and that this is what he wants.

Hidden agendas

These are some hypotheses that you have made concerning the many agendas which you suspect are influencing the decision about Mr Sahid's future.

Misunderstanding Mr Sahid's wishes

You have taken time to help Mr Sahid talk about what he would like to happen and you think he is aware of the risks. You suspect that others have not been as conscientious.

Ward-round politics

You have noticed a pattern that Dr Jenkins, who seems to have a genuine concern for his patients, always swings behind the views of the physiotherapist, but you don't know why.

Double standards

You are fairly confident that if there was immediate pressure on beds on Ward 14, Mr Sahid would be going home right away.

Race and gender

You wonder if Dr Jenkins, a white, male doctor might view Mr Sahid's position differently if Mr Sahid were a woman. Are men thought to be less able to care for themselves in the community? It is also possible that the fact that Mr Sahid is Asian could have some bearing, but you have no hypothesis at present.

Generalizing from a previous case

The death at home of a patient who was discharged too early has made the hospital very cautious in these circumstances. You surmise that it is this previous patients' 'needs' which are being (belatedly) met and not the present needs of Mr Sahid.

Care in the community undervalued

You have a feeling that your medical colleagues underestimate the extent of domiciliary services and that they feel more comfortable if they know patients are going to receive institutional care rather than care in the community.

Your own feelings

You are aware that when you become old you think that you would prefer to return to your own home, even if you were alone, with no family support. The risks would have to be greater than you think they are with Mr Sahid before you would go into residential care. You are trying to be careful that this does not influence your view of what Mr Sahid wants.

At the next ward round, you will be sharing the reasoning which has led you to your view of Mr Sahid's position and your recommendation he returns home with domiciliary care.

Which of the seven hypotheses above do you think you should address and how?

Anti-discriminatory practice

FRUIT SALAD!

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Social work which is culturally competent, anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive is not easy to achieve. There are difficulties in agreeing common definitions of what these terms mean, and even more problems in translating them into practice. *Fruit Salad!* begins (and we emphasize that it is just a beginning) to address anti-discriminatory practice by using a small, concrete example. Like all these activities, it is drawn from practice experience.

Method

Fruit Salad! can be done by a practice teacher and student together or by a small group. Try discussing it as a pair first, then moving into a group.

Make sure students immerse themselves in the situation; they *are* the groupworker using *Fruit Salad!* and they *have* to make a decision. When they are thinking about options, challenge any glib answers and don't get sidetracked into discussing the value of *Fruit Salad!* as a warm-up itself, because this avoids the issues. This is a tough activity and it is too easy to get diverted.

Ask students to write down their decision as the groupworker, and the reasons behind their decision. As usual, get feedback about the activity itself. (Allow about one hour in total).

Variations

The issues of power, difference and disadvantage raised by *Fruit Salad!* are relevant to all forms of discrimination. However, at the conclusion of this activity, you should draw parallels with other forms of discrimination. You could ask the student to construct a similar incident to bring out the issues for a different focus of discrimination, based on race or gender or class or age or creed or sexuality, etc.

Anti-discriminatory practice

FRUIT SALAD! Activity

You are co-leading a group for single carers of young children on a large estate. You and your co-worker have run other similar groups and they have been participative, hard-working and fun.

The group is planned to meet weekly and consists of twelve parents. You have had a fairly successful first group meeting and you plan to start off the second session with a short *warm-up* which regularly gets you and the group in good spirits. Even people who are not fond of games say they enjoy it. This is it:

Group members and your co-leader sit on their chairs in a circle whilst you stand in the middle without a chair. You explain that you will go round the circle giving each person the name of a fruit (apple, orange, pear ... apple, orange, pear ... etc), so there are three or four people in each fruit set. You will shout out the name of one of these fruits, and those people (for example, the "oranges") have to change chairs. Since you are also searching for a chair and there is a chair short, somebody is left standing in the middle again. That person then shouts the name of a fruit ... etc. You also explain that the person in the middle can shout, "Fruit Salad!" at which point every person (apples, oranges, pears) must move seats. Inevitably, people end up sitting in each other's laps and every-one has a good laugh. Energy is released and people feel in a good mood to start the group off. You usually let the game go on for ten to fifteen calls, or about five minutes.*

* a yuppie version of FRUIT SALAD! uses kiwi, kumquats and mangoes!

Like most introductory activities used as a warm-up, it can sound pointless on paper, but comes to life with action.

During the first session of the group you have noticed that Joan, the only carer in the group who is looking after a grandchild, walks with difficulty and uses a stick. She looks as though she suffers from arthritis. She was an enthusiastic participant during the first group session.

Fruit Salad! would be just right for the group to start off the second session.

What options do you have?
What do you decide to do?

Assumptions - making them explicit

LEFT-HAND COLUMN Activity

INTRODUCTION

Some cultures are more open than others when it comes to expressing inner thoughts and feelings. Most situations have a "subtext" of unspoken thoughts - the kind of conversation we are accustomed to keep inside our heads. This was illustrated in the film *Annie Hall*, when Woody Allen and Diane Keaton meet at a party and the verbalized conversation between them is subtitled with their private, internal thoughts. Needless to say, the open conversation and the private ones are quite different, but it is interesting how their non-verbal communication reveals some of their inner thoughts.

Of course, there are inner thoughts which it is better not to reveal, but often it is the inner conversation which directs our actions, and for that reason we need to find ways of expressing the subtext openly, and encouraging others to reveal theirs. Senge, 1990 (The Learning Organisation), describes a technique called *The Left Hand Column* in which you select a specific situation where your interaction with a person does not seem to be working. You write out a sample of the exchange in the form of a script on the right-hand side of the page. On the left-hand side you write what you are thinking but not saying at each point in the exchange. For example:

WHAT I'M THINKING

I don't think that's his opinion - I bet he's got it from the physiotherapist.

I've spent a long time with Mr Sahid and I know he wants to go home.

You feel guilty because you sent Mr Greaves home too early and he died.

You don't think much of domiciliary services, do you?

And I wish you wouldn't interrupt me like that.

I don't suppose you've wondered what he might feel like as the only Asian man in the home...

Where would you like to spend your last days?

This is a terrible decision, but you're more powerful than me so I'll keep quiet.

WHAT IS SAID

Dr J: In my view I think Mr Sahid would be better off in residential care.

ME: I'm not sure Mr Sahid sees it that way

Dr.J: He'd be at considerable risk left in his own home.

ME: Well, we've got good domiciliary services and they've told me....

Dr J: Unfortunately, they can't be around all the time, and he'd get company in Oakbrook Home.

ME: Well, they do give a comprehensive service. And I'm not sure how "at home" Mr Sahid would feel at Oakbrook.

Dr J: I think we should give it a try - it's better than him neglecting himself at home

ME: Mmmmm.

The reason why it is important to bring the left-hand column to the surface is because it is often these hidden assumptions which influence our actions. My assumptions about Dr Jenkins lead me to pussy-foot around, and I lose an opportunity to tell him I think there is a problem.

How might I have shared my own views from the left hand column?

Beginnings, middles, ends

TREE

INTRODUCTION

Tree is a metaphor for the primary processes in direct practice. The ground level is the 'here and now', with the trunk representing the concerns which have brought the person into contact with the social work agency. The roots are the various causes which have been feeding the concern and which often lay hidden. The branches are the opportunities for change and growth, the options available to help address the concerns.

Purpose

This chapter looks at processes and outcomes in social work practice. The concept of a practice method is demystified by linking it to the generic processes of beginnings, middles and endings in work with clients. The chapter illustrates how students can learn to work in a systematic and methodical fashion.

Method

Tree should be used when practice teacher and student have had an opportunity to work together with a client (perhaps after an initial assessment or meeting).

Each person (practice teacher and student) should consider the three elements of the 'tree':

The trunk

This represents the concerns as seen by the practice teacher, student, client(s) and any other significant persons.

The roots

These represent the causes of the concerns.

The branches

These represent the aspirations and wants of the client, and the various options for achieving them.

Practice teacher and student compare their 'Trees'. How similar or different are their perceptions of the concerns, problems and difficulties which make up the trunk? How much attention would each pay to the root causes? What range of options were identified? Draw fruit on those branches which you think are likely to lead to a successful outcome. (About one hour total).

Variations

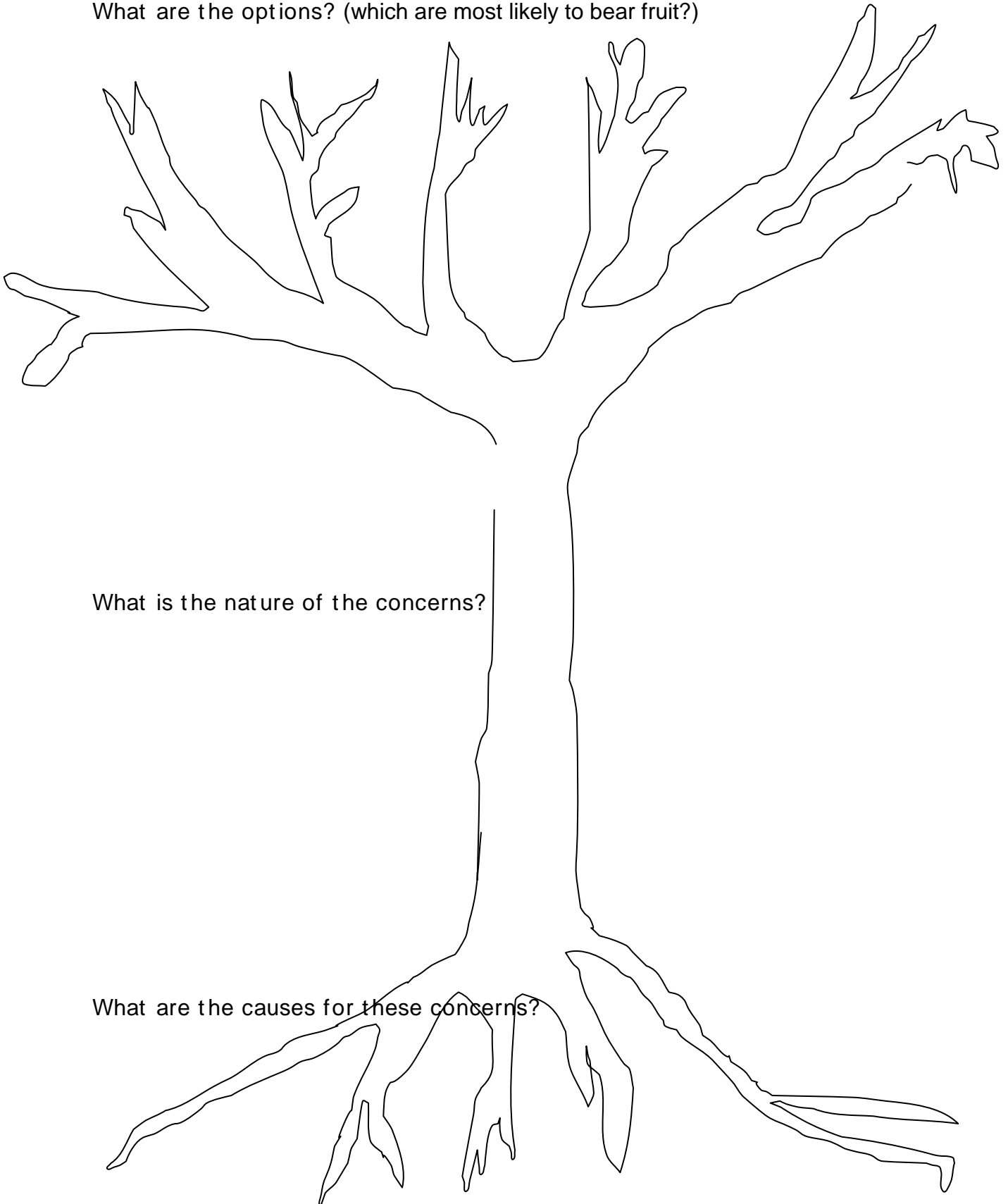
Although the concerns are represented by the one tree trunk, these are often perceived differently by the people involved (just as the trunk's colour, shape and texture varies from different angles).

It is important to think as widely as possible about the options available to help work with the concerns which have been identified, and ways of alleviating them. Do the client's aspirations differ from those of their carer, family or the agency?

When the student has gained more familiarity with the work, it helps to return to the *Tree* and discuss how far it is useful to dig for the causes of present problems and concerns.

Beginnings, middles, ends
TREE Activity

What are the options? (which are most likely to bear fruit?)



Beginnings, middles, ends **WHAT IS THE PROBLEM? activity**

Statements of concern

Arriving at a clear statement of a concern is not simple. We often express our problems and concerns in fuzzy, unclear ways; they often need unravelling, especially if people have accepted others' definitions of their concerns. It can be a new, empowering experience to start to question these definitions. Of course, there are further complications if the main concern as you see it is not accepted by the person as a concern at all; or the main problem is seen as you!

Below are twelve statements which people might make in response to the question, 'What's the problem?' Can you match them to the four categories (A-D)?

My concern is . . .

- | | | | |
|---|--|----|--|
| 1 | He won't do as he is told. | 7 | He needs to stop drinking. |
| 2 | I can't pay the rent. | 8 | We're not happy. |
| 3 | You won't let us have our children back. | 9 | I want to have breakfast at whatever time I want it. |
| 4 | We don't know whether to let her leave home. | 10 | I feel depressed and I can't get down to anything. |
| 5 | I'm overweight and it's affecting my health. | 11 | The other kids in this home keep picking on me. |
| 6 | No-one understands me. | 12 | I keep getting caught. |

A Concerns which are really goals

Sometimes we express something we want to do (a goal) as a concern. What we mean is that what we want to do is a problem to somebody else. For example, as a resident of Oakbrook Home, I want to have breakfast at whatever time I want it (#9), but the problem is: 'the cook won't let me', or 'there's not enough staff on and I can't get it myself'. Also, the client's goal for somebody else can look like a problem statement: 'he needs to stop drinking' means 'I want him to stop drinking'.

B Concerns about other people

Most problems involve other people to an extent, but some statements focus only on the behaviour of somebody else (#1, #11). If the other person does not recognize this as a concern, the statement has to be reframed, such as #1: 'I get angry when he comes home late'; #11: 'I can't handle it when the other kids make fun of me'. These reframed statements bring the concern closer to the person's control. In #3, you are the problem. This is best expressed openly, and often it can be a focus for the work: what has to happen to get rid of the agency?

C Concerns which are not specific

Some statements of concern need much more careful spelling out. They give you a sense of how the client is feeling, for example #6 and #8, but you would not be clear about what needed to change in order to alleviate the difficulty. Broad, general statements need detailing so that you and the client know whether you can take steps to help with the concern. More details help you both to decide which direction those steps should take.

D Concerns which are specific

Some statements are relatively clear expressions of a concern, e.g. #2, #5. A successful outcome is more likely if the concern is relatively specific and the client is able to do something about it. However, many concerns are not like that; in these circumstances, your skill is to help the client to reframe the problem as much as possible towards a statement which is more specific and more within the client's influence. However, the reframing should not go so far that clients feel their original statement has been lost.

Comparative social work

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

INTRODUCTION

'Gulliver's Travels' consists of an opportunity for students to think about social work practice in different countries. They are provided with brief details of an imaginary country and have to consider how to develop social work in that country, drawing on the experience of social work in their own country.

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to help students to consider how social work differs across different countries or regions, and as a result gain a greater understanding of social in their own country.

Method

Gulliver's travels is best undertaken by a group of three or four students. It can also be completed successfully with a single student and practice teacher working together.

The students read the extract from the report on the imaginary country 'Gangnidborb' (about five minutes).

Independently, they complete their own recommendation sheet (ten minutes) and then jointly discuss the reasons for their recommendations (about half an hour).

In the subsequent practice tutorial, students discuss their views about how to develop social work practice - paying particular attention to the reasons for their recommendations.

In the practice tutorial, students should be encouraged to explore their views about the nature and form of social work practice in their own country. Students should identify those aspects of social work that reflect good practice and which could be used as models to develop practice in 'Gangnidborb'. However, models of practice are not necessarily directly transferable to another cultural context.

Encourage the students to consider whether their views about good practice in their own country have been influenced by considering the development of social work practice in another country.

Variations

You may want to change the details of the example country, 'Gangnidborb', to reflect particular aspects of social work practice that you would like students to explore. There is no reason why students need to consider a country with little previous experience of social work. They consider a country with a similar history to their own, but one which exhibits a different form of social work. Likewise, real examples serve just as well as imaginary countries. For example, if you are working within the United Kingdom you may wish to use the different constituent countries, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and Wales to explore differences in practice. For example, a comparison of Northern Ireland with one of the other UK countries allows students to explore the influence of sectarianism on social work practice (see for example Cairns 1989: Smith 1996).

It is also possible to consider regional differences using a comparative approach; e.g. social work practice in two different US states, such as urban New Jersey and rural Oklahoma.

If you have access to the internet you can easily obtain basic data on all countries to include in the information you prepare for students. This will give your simulations a sense of reality.

In the activity you may wish to set limits on the resources that a student can suggest are made available for the development of social work. You could suggest that a certain budget would be provided from external sources; in the case of an Eastern European State this might be from the European Union.

Comparative social work **GULLIVER'S TRAVELS Activity**

Briefing information

On behalf of the Partnership of Nations Organization for Social Work Development (PONOSWOD) you have joined three other international observers to make a visit to Gangnidorb, in order to observe the level of social work development, and to work with the Gangnidorbs to advise about future needs. Some of the essential extracts from the reports your colleagues have prepared on Gangnidorb are given in the Gangnidorb Fact Sheet (below).

Report to PONOSWOD on Gangnidorb

When you have considered the Fact Sheet below, use the following questions to help you frame your report.

We recommend that social work should be established and that it should seek to achieve the following (use bullet points):

To do this we suggest the following strategy:

It will also be necessary to identify the following resources:

GANGNIDORB fact sheet

Background

A medium-sized country - 453,679 sq.k. - located in Eastern Europe, with access to the sea. The population is 45 million people and has been declining for four years. Most of the population lives in rural communities. There are six large industrial cities with a combined population of 12 million.

Recently

Since the overthrow of the communist state, there has been an attempt to establish a democratic political system and a free market economy. However, economic production has fallen by 50% in four years. The infrastructure (roads, telephones, etc.) is in a desperate state of disrepair.

The population

is highly differentiated. There is a small minority, less than 5%, with access to considerable wealth, the rest of the population lives in poverty. The principal minority group is the population which lives in the west of the country - the 'westerners'.

By tradition

under the communist regime there were some homes for older people, but access to these was limited to those who occupied special positions in the party hierarchy, or for particularly favoured groups, such as farm workers or members of the army. In addition, there is a well-established tradition of sanatoria for all groups in society (for example, children with behavioural difficulties might be sent to a sanatorium for a few weeks recuperation).

Housing

is in severe shortage, and it takes many years' wait to be allocated a flat in an apartment block. Often, these apartments are overcrowded with several generations of the family sharing the same room. In the countryside people live in small single-storey wooden houses.

Previous structures and services

The police have dealt with all forms of crime and families have been expected to cope with their own problems.

A network

of psychiatric hospitals exists. In the past these have been used to incarcerate dissidents . . . and there a few children's houses for orphans or children abandoned by their parents. These houses typically care for 60 or more children. Adoption and fostering are unknown in any formal, legal sense.

Current problems

The country has been traumatized by involvement in a recent war, and many conscript soldiers have returned home wounded and psychologically distressed, often unable to find jobs. There are a growing range of problems; a rapid rise in drug abuse, an increase in crime (much of it controlled by Mafia-type groups), an increase in suicide and depression, and a growth in prostitution.

Finances

The government's financial resources are severely limited and tax revenues are falling. There has been 10% inflation per month for the last two years. The government is committed to the establishment of social work as a profession to mediate the hardships that the population is experiencing.

Social work

There has never been a social work profession. There are a large number of trained doctor, psychologists and psychiatrists (some of whom are keen to retrain as social workers). The previous regime took the view that there could be no social problems under a communist system and therefore no need for a profession of social work.

If you were to compile a similar Fact Sheet on your own country or state, what recommendations would you be likely to come up with? How much would these differ from the actual organization of social work in your country or state?

Culturally competent practice

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

Purpose

This activity is designed to sensitize students to cultural differences by understanding more about their own cultural inheritance. The student learns that cultural competence is not an absolute quality and that 'culture' is not something which is limited to certain groups, classes or races.

Method

This activity is most effective if it can be done by a small group of students and practice teachers from diverse backgrounds. In this way, influences which individuals may well take for granted are put in perspective. It is a good exercise for pairs of practice teachers and students to do together early in the placement.

Give *You are what you eat* to the students and practice teachers with no prior preparation, other than a brief explanation of the purpose of the activity. Participants can work in pairs, threes or fours, but no larger.

Get feedback from everybody. Help the group to move out from the focus on meals towards broader considerations of the impact of culture as an active force in their lives. Encourage people to share any new understandings they have gained about themselves and other people. (Allow 45 - 60 minutes).

Variations

The experience of meals is universal and feels relevant to all individuals; a colloquium on food at John Hopkins University, Baltimore, in 1991 concluded that 'feeding and eating is really one with the human heart.'

In addition, experiences of music provide another opportunity to expose cultural influences. Early experiences of medicine (what was considered to be healthy or unhealthy, what were the family's pet cures?) are also enlightening.

Culturally competent practice

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT Activity

To prepare for this activity, put these meals in order for a typical day and add any meals which are not named:

(for example, some South Walesians eat *tea-tea*, a meal of cold, sweet foods taken in the late afternoon)

* DINNER * BRUNCH * TEA * BREAKFAST * LUNCH * ELEVENSES * SUPPER *

- as a child, which of these meals did you eat?
- what image does the word to describe each meal bring to mind?
- we only need to eat two meals a day, so why so many possible meals?
- were there any periods of fast in your family?
- what was the main meal of the day in your family; who was present?
- on weekdays, was your main meal of the day at school or at home?
- was there any special day of the week with different meal patterns?

Smells

what are your earliest memories of food smells?
what, if any, smells greeted you as you came home from school?
are there any smells which have special memories for you?

Tastes

what was your favourite-tasting food; was it associated with a family meal?
did your family encourage you to try unfamiliar foods and tastes?
if you didn't like the taste of something on your plate, what happened?

Touch

did you have to wash your hands before coming to the table?
what foods could you eat by hand at the main family meal?
were you ever hit for misbehaviour at the table? if so, what had you done?

Sounds

did your family make any blessing before eating?
were family meals times for conversation or silence?
if conversational, were these happy, argumentative or a mix?

Sights

who prepared the meal, set the table and served the food?
how was the table set - did you have a tablecloth, napkins, etc?
would you often or seldom see guests eating with you at the family table?

How have the habits of your childhood meals influenced your adult meals? If you share meal-times with a partner, what similarities and differences did you notice in your meal-time behaviours? Have other cultures influenced the way you take the main meal of the day now, or is it very similar to your childhood experience?

Empowering practice

STEPS

INTRODUCTIION

Steps takes nine principles of partnership practice and asks the student to consider their relevance to a particular piece of work, and how they have been put into practice.

Purpose

Issues of power, oppression and discrimination have permeated the teaching and learning associated with all of the activities associated with modern social work practice. This section brings these issues together under the single notion of 'empowering practice', focusing on empowerment and partnership as essential aspects of the student's anti-oppressive practice.

Concepts like partnership and empowerment are easily voiced, but less easily made specific and put into practice. This module aims to explore these notions in more detail and encourage students to apply them in a practical way to their work.

Method

Use the nine *Steps* as a trigger to help the student consider what empowerment and participation mean. Are these principles which the student agrees with, or do they want to make some changes to them?

When the student is satisfied with their own *Steps*, ask for an audit of a piece of the student's work, applying these principles in a practical way.

Later in the placement, ask the student to review the principles with a view to adding any which have been triggered by their experiences on the placement.

Variations

Are the *Steps* universal to all aspects of social work? It is illuminating to work on this activity across settings if you have the opportunity to join with other practice teachers and students (for example, a practice teacher and student from a child protection team and from a community care setting). How commonly applicable are these principles?

Empowering practice STEPS Activity

Take a piece of work you have been involved in and consider it in relation to these nine practical steps to partnership and empowerment.

Any other steps you want to add?

- 9 Records should form a principle means of sharing the purpose of intervention and of assessing progress for all parties involved
- 8 Active intervention should be brief rather than lengthy
- 7 Tasks should form the central working tool in the intervention
- 6 Goals should be negotiated, explicit and observable and be within people's capacity to achieve, with assistance of the workers involved
- 5 Problems should be fully agreed and be described in ordinary language
- 4 When an individual is cared for away from home, positive efforts should be made to maintain links with relevant family members and friends
- 3 People should be encouraged to be active participants in determining the service they receive
- 2 If there is more than one active worker in a case there should be a common understanding of the nature and scope of the work
- 1 Users and potential users should be clear about how to contact the necessary people in any service with which they are involved.

The principles above are taken from: Marsh, P. and Fisher, M. (1992), *Good Intentions: developing partnerships in social services*, York: Rowntree/Community Care.

Endings ARE WE THERE YET?

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This activity helps the student to consider the importance of endings in professional practice and how to make best use of them. Primarily, this is achieved by anticipating endings from the beginning of a piece of work, and by seeing endings as transitions; every exit is a new entrance. The exercise coaches the student in the use of endings as an opportunity for a joint evaluation with people of the progress which has been made. The student and the service user or carer need to know and understand the direction of travel before they can evaluate whether they have arrived.

Method

This activity can be done either by the practice teacher and the student together or in a small group of practice teachers and students. Allow about thirty minutes.

Each person needs a copy of the ten "destination statements". Discuss each statement in turn, looking at what other factors you would need to know before you could answer the question, *Are we there yet?*

Following the discussion, ask the student to rate each of the ten statements on a continuum which ranges from *Fuzzy* to *Clear* (1-10). How difficult (1) or easy (10) would it be to know whether the person making the statement had reached that destination?

Variations

If the student already has examples of 'statements about destinations' from their own work, use these in exchange for some of the examples included in *Are we there yet?*

Endings

ARE WE THERE YET? Activity

When children go on a long car journey they tend to ask the same question several times: 'are we there yet?' Partly, this is wishful thinking and partly it is because they don't have enough information to let them know how to judge what the end of the journey looks like or how to pace their progress towards it.

The first step to knowing whether we are there yet is knowing where we want to go and being able to recognize progress towards that destination. This suggests a linear approach, but this is mistaken; although the general progress may be linear (*here to there*) the process is likely to be very different, more like a series of loops.

In each of the ten destinations below, how might a person know if they were 'there' yet?

- 1 I want to give up smoking
- 2 I want to lead a more fulfilling life
- 3 I want to be rich
- 4 We want to have a happy family
- 5 She wants me to get a better job
- 6 We want to move nearer to her parents
- 7 I want to have my children back
- 8 I want to stay in my own home
- 9 I don't want to feel hurt in this relationship
- 10 I don't want him to tell any more lies

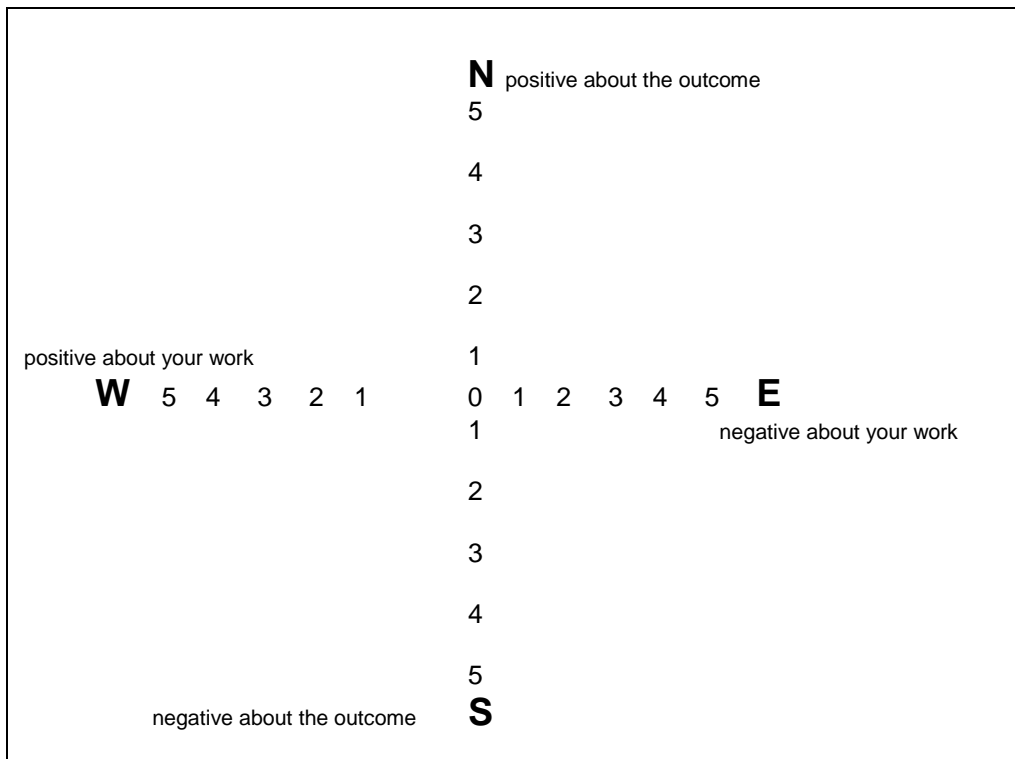
Evaluating practice
MAPPING THE WORK Activity

INTRODUCTION

There are two litmus tests of your work with people; one is an evaluation of the *outcome* of the work for those people, and the other is an evaluation of your own *practice*. The first litmus test would measure how far you and the person felt the goal had been achieved - how near is the person to his or her destination? The second litmus test would measure what part you had in helping or hindering that process. For example, you can think of situations where the person felt that your involvement was very helpful, even when the goal was not achieved. Similarly, the person could achieve the goal but not think that your intervention had much bearing on this.

If we take a vertical axis to indicate the person's views about the outcome of the work (the further "north", the more positive and the further 'south', the more negative), and a horizontal axis for the person's views about your work (the further 'west', the more positive and the further "east", the more negative), we have four sectors.

In the NW, the person's view of the outcome of the work is positive and they also feel good about your work. In the NE, their view of the outcome remains positive, but they have negative feelings about your involvement. In the SE, they do not think they have achieved their goal and they do not think your work has been helpful, either. In the SW sector, they still do not think they have reached their goal, but they nevertheless see your intervention as helpful.



Take an intervention with a service users or carer and 'map' your work with them. With their permission, you could use this in your portfolio of practice.

Family-centred practice

WHANAU

INTRODUCTION

Whanau is an activity which puts students in touch with the family dimension of social work practice, by looking at decision-making and power in their own families. The activity is inspired by Maori practices in New Zealand, where a radical approach to decision-making in the area of child welfare has put the wider family centre-stage. The approach is called *whanau*, from the Maori word for family.

Purpose

For good and bad, the family is a major influence on the lives of children and adults, and it is important to be able to work with the idea and the reality of family. This chapter aims to put students in touch with their own feelings about families and develops the theme of partnership in work with families.

Method

You need a blank sheet of paper on which to draw your family tree, starting with yourself towards the bottom of the page. Use the model in the *Whanau* activity, with the symbols described. Discuss your family as you draw it. Next, ask the student to go through the same process. (You need to check out beforehand that the student is comfortable with this request).

When you have both completed family trees and you have an idea of who is who, discuss the three questions (which follow the example in the *Whanau* activity below) about power and decision-making in your respective families.

Discuss your views of families - positive and negative responses - and the political context of 'the family'. Are the student's thoughts and feelings concerning families likely to prevent or help working in partnership with families? (Allow 30 - 60 minutes).

Variations

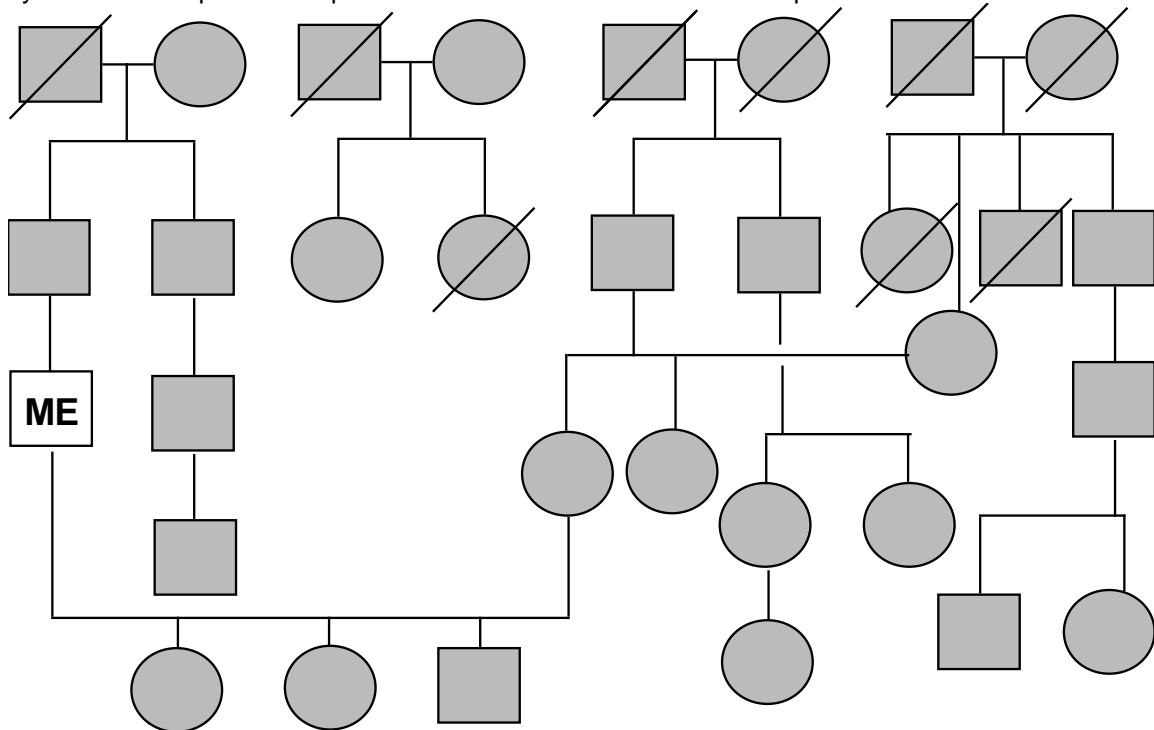
If *Whanau* is used with a small group, it is best for one of the group leaders to model the process on a flipchart and then ask the group to work in pairs, sharing as much as they wish with the large group. Professionals are often particularly hostile to the idea of their relatives having any say in their family's decisions. If they have 'escaped their background', they may stress friendships rather than kinships, but this may not reflect the values of the people they work with. When the chips are down, many people rely on the wider family in a crisis, and given the choice between decisions made by professionals and those made by the broader family, many - perhaps most - prefer the latter.

Family-centred practice WHANAU Activity

Whanau is the Maori word for family. The Maori perspective on family decision-making is having an impact on services to both Maori and Pakeha (white) populations in Aotearoa (New Zealand). The professionals act as facilitators to bring family members together to make a collective decision about the care and welfare of children in the family. (Decisions about prosecution in child protection cases are made by the courts). Relatives come from great distances, from overseas if necessary, to be included in the family decision-making meeting, which can sometimes take all day. See Wilcox, N. *et al*, (1991), *Family Decision Making: Family Group Conferences*, NZ: Practitioners' Publishing.

To begin to appreciate this perspective we need to understand our own families and understand how each family develops its own 'protocol', or ways of doing things.

Using symbols (circles for females and squares for males), draw a family tree going back as far as your grandparents, if you can. Make sure you include all the branches and off-shoots; cousins, step-aunts, and so on. If you have children you may wish to draw the tree from their point of view, to include their other parent's branch of the tree. Put a line through any symbol which represents a person who has died. Here is an example:



Consider these questions:

- *Who makes the decisions in your family and home?*
- *If there was a family conference whom would you want invited? whom not?*
- *Who is powerful in your family?*

Maori dissatisfaction with Pakeha (white European) ways of doing things led to a re-assertion of their idea of family decision-making. It is interesting that both Maori and Pakeha populations are now using the 'Whanau' system successfully.

(Special thanks to Larry Monu, Judy Moore, Maraea Ropata and Harry Walker.)

Feelings and behaviours

TABOO

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Most people are aware of a gap or dissonance that sometimes exists between what they are feeling 'inside' and what they are saying 'outside'. This activity examines this gap and explores the student's response to it. It focuses on how the student handles taboo subjects.

The activity also concerns the student's view of learning. How do beliefs, feelings and actions influence openness to learning?

Method

The practice teacher and the student work individually, spending about 10 minutes reading *Taboo* and thinking about each discussion point in turn.

Discuss each point together and make brief notes.

Consider actual situations which have aroused difficult feelings.

Ask the student for feedback about the usefulness of the activity and discuss any residual feelings that the activity has aroused.

Variations

Taboo can easily be translated into other possibilities; for example, reversing the races (black patient / white doctor) or introducing gender or age factors as the significant differences. The activity has the greatest impact when the account is told so that the student can identify closely with the patient. The example in *Taboo* is from the point of view of a white woman.

This activity deals with difficult material, so we recommend that it is used with particular care and by a practice teacher/student pair. However, two or more pairs can get together later to compare their discussions.

Feelings and behaviours

TABOO Activity

A white woman is admitted to hospital after a climbing accident on holiday. She is conscious, but unable to move without racking pain, and feels extremely vulnerable and dependent. These feelings of pain and vulnerability are new and somewhat shocking to her, because she is usually healthy, strong and independent.

When the doctor comes in for the examination, the woman looks up and sees that the doctor is black. For a split second, her reaction is negative - feelings of vulnerability and dependency increase.

The next split second, she feels ashamed, guilty and horrified by these feelings and is determined to try to overcome them, and not to show any trace of them to the black doctor.

Discussion points

Was the patient's reaction racist?

Was the patient's reaction "normal"?

How could you explain the patient's initial feelings?

The patient has previously expressed anti-racist views. In the light of this, how do you view the patient's first reaction to the doctor?

How do you view the patient's attempts to hide the initial feelings by covering them up?

If you were the doctor, what would be important to you?

If you were the doctor what would you *do* in this situation?

Generalist and specialist practice **ESSENCE OF SOCIAL WORK '98**

INTRODUCTION

Essence is designed to trigger a consideration of what is different about, and what is common to, the various manifestations of social work. In this chapter, students are encouraged to look for the 'core' of social work practice.

Purpose

One of the major continuing sea-changes in social work practice is that between generic and specialist practice. This chapter explores the historical development of these practices and explores differences between 'generalist', 'generic' and 'specialist' practice.

Method

Read the advertisements in the *Essence* activity.

They are all taken from the back pages of the same issue of *Community Care* (4/12/96). The names of employing agencies have been changed, contacts and addresses have been omitted, but in all other respects the advertisements are unaltered.

What do you consider are the main similarities and what are the main differences in the work which these job adverts reveal? What is the 'social worker' in them?

What do you think the job adverts tell you about current social work practice? Try asking five people who are not connected with social work (friends and relatives, for instance) what social work is.

Variations

Five or six detailed job descriptions from your own agency might draw out the commonalities and differences even more clearly. Try comparing these with adverts from other non-social work journals for related posts (for example, health visitors) - how different and how similar are they?

In order to begin to understand the great diversity in the way specialist practice is represented students could be asked to make a note of all the different specialist social work practice they are aware of. The harder task is to identify what is the 'social worker' in all of these.

Generalist and specialist practice
ESSENCE OF SOCIAL WORK '98 Activity

West Hollisshire NHS Trust

PRORITY ENHANCED CARE MANAGER

£17,282-£19,372 pro rata per annum

A highly motivated person is required to manage a service providing quality Community Care to the people of West Hollisshire.

You should have a business background, be computer literate and familiar with Microsoft Word and Excel packages. You must also be flexible and prepared to accept responsibility outside working hours.

The hours are 22.5 per week worked in the main over three days, based at Park Hospital.

Car driver essential.

Perlman House Adolescent Unit
SENIOR PRACTITIONER

£25,092-£26,969 p.a. inc.

Perlman House is an NHS tertiary inpatient, day patient and outpatient unit for adolescents. It provides multi-professional assessment and therapeutic services for young people with a wide range of problems. Referrals come from both health and local authority services.

We are looking for a senior practitioner with substantial operational experience with child care and child protection to join as a senior member of the multi-professional team. Within the Unit you undertake assessments as a care manager, coordinate discharge packages, compile court reports and provide specialist advice in child protection. Externally you will liaise closely with local authority social work, education and probation services. Expertise in group work and an interest to develop and run outpatient group programmes are desirable.

City of Younghusband

Social Services Department

Fostering and Adoption Officer

£20,229 to £21,975

We offer the opportunity of undertaking a variety of both fostering and adoption work, as part of a skilled and innovative but busy team. At present we are continuing to develop a Short Break Scheme and other services for children with disabilities, and would particularly welcome applicants with an interest in this area.

You should be a qualified Social Worker and have substantial child care experience. Family placement experience would be an advantage.

Experience and previous skills are recognized by this Unit and are built upon through regular supervision and opportunities for further training and development.

Meyer and Timms County Council
WORKING TOWARDS EQUALITY

Social Workers (Part-time)

Salary £14,436-£20,766 pro rata

At Coping, 18.5 hours each post. An opportunity has arisen to join our Older Adults Team, for qualified Social Workers (CQSW, CSS, DipSW).

The responsibilities of the post will include individual and care assessments of need, as well as the arrangement and monitoring of complex packages of care. This will involve using a range of provider services including independent and voluntary agencies, both in a hospital and community setting. The

work is intensive in nature and experience of work with physically frail elderly people and people with dementia is desirable.

The Team is committed to providing good support and supervision and developing staff through training initiatives. A formal appraisal and development scheme is actively used. In addition there is the opportunity for information technology use.

A full driving licence is essential. A casual car user allowance is attached to these posts.

*Reid Community Mental Health NHS Trust
and Epstein Hospice*

Bereavement Counsellor

£16,024-£18,747 + Allowances (A+C Grade 6)

Younghusband Trust is looking to appoint a full time family counsellor to provide support to families and carers facing bereavement.

Based in two palliative care units, you will work closely with Volunteers and Nursing Staff in the delivery and ongoing development of a high quality Bereavement Service.

If you have background as a Social Worker and have experience of bereavement care, we would like to hear from you.

BIESTEK SOCIAL SERVICES

Senior Outreach Day Centre Worker

£17,097-£18,837 p.a.inc. (2 posts)

To enable people with a high level of need to access and obtain appropriate services, including working in service users' own homes. You will need to hold an RMN, CSS, DipSW, CQSW or other relevant qualification. You will need to have experience at a supervisory level of working directly with people who have mental health support needs, have a knowledge of community outreach work and of relevant legislation relating to mental health.

TI MMS SOCI ETY

gi vi ng chi ldren a chance

African Planning Scheme Social Worker

£16,700-£23,000 2 year contract

'Positive Options' provides practical support to parents living with HIV/ AIDS who wish to make long term plans for the future care of their children.

You will work directly with families and children from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds, providing advice and support. In order to maximise the resources available to them, you'll need to liaise with a range of statutory and voluntary agencies, in both the UK and Africa. You will also build links with the African community, who comprise 75% of our users.

Training, consultancy and co-work with other professionals, such as family finding social workers in the Boroughs will be an important aspect of this role. You will also need to keep yourself well informed with regards to legislation and information on HIV and AIDS, and keep this and other important information in an organized manner.

With a minimum of two years in a local authority childcare setting, you communicate well with children, young people and families and are well-versed in legislation affecting children.

You are self-motivated, committed to anti-discriminatory practice and possess the confidence, common sense and personal strength to work with families facing bereavement and other complex issues. A good standard of written and spoken English, a knowledge of African languages and a recognized social work qualification are essential. Section 5.2(d) of the Race Relations Act applies.

London Borough of Barclay

Specialist Social Worker with Deaf People

£17,097 - £21,978 p.a. inc.

We are seeking a qualified Social Worker and a qualified (or Stage 3) BSL user, based within the Physical and Sensory Disabilities Team at the Community Care Advice Centre, Hadleigh Road, Pinker Park..

Barclay has an informed and active deaf community where groups work alongside local voluntary groups and agencies.

You will be based within an established Community Care Team, which undertakes assessments and care management with disabled people.

Direct work with deaf people and development work within the Borough are the focus of this post, therefore candidates should be suitably experienced.

This post is available for job share.

South Richmondshire

WORKING TOWARDS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Independent People

We are looking to set up a pool of independent people who could be asked to help investigate complaints or sit on a complaints Review Panel as part of our borough's complaints procedure.

You will need to have:

- excellent inter-personal skills, tact and sensitivity
- a social work qualification (although exceptional people without qualification will be considered)
- knowledge and experience of social care, Social Services Departments and complaints
- investigative, organizational, analytical and report writing skills
- independence from the County - which means you must not have carried out any work (paid or unpaid) for the County before.

We will provide full administrative support as necessary.

Investigation and Review Panel work will be contracted out individually dependent on the case and will be time-limited.

We will pay £150 per day, all inclusive.

North Bartlett Council

Social Work Department

Community Worker

£13,977-£18,180

(7.5% Irregular Hours Allowance)

You will promote, implement and support community development in priority areas of Sainsbury Social Work Area Team.

You will undertake analysis of social needs and provide support and practical assistance to a variety of groups within the area. As a result, there may be a requirement to work evenings.

It is essential that you have a Degree or Diploma in Youth and Community Work. Possession of a relevant social work qualification and a driving licence is desirable.

CITY AND COUNTY OF MINAHAN

CO-ORDINATOR - DEMENTIA TEAM

Salary: £20,247 - £23,925

Unitary Dementia Team is a joint initiative between the City and County of Minahan and Pincus Healthcare NHS Trust, and offers a comprehensive, multi disciplinary service. The Co-ordinator will be responsible for the leadership and management of the team of social workers, nurses, care managers and specialist home carers and night settlers. The ideal candidate will have a sound awareness of the issues involved in working with persons with dementia, their relatives and carers; proven assessment, communication and organisational skills; and knowledge and preferably working experience of the NHS and Community Care Act and Care Management process. Recognized qualification essential (CQSW, CSS, DipSW).

Octavia Hill School

Head of Care

Salary Scale NJC PO Range

The Headteacher and Governors seek to appoint a suitably qualified and experienced person to fill this post as soon as possible. The successful applicant will be a member of the Senior Management team, responsible for the residential staff.

Octavia Hill caters for approximately 40 Statemented boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties. the post holder need not be resident, but accommodation is available on site.

Goals - agreeing and achieving them

LADDER AND SNAKES

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This activity helps to teach the student how to move from a focus on what is wrong to a focus on what is wanted; a move from *present problems to future goals*, and how to get from one to the other.

Method

This activity can be done with a single student, but it is particularly well suited to a small group. Ask the students to think of something they want to do - a personal goal which they don't mind sharing with the group. Explain that this can be a long-term or short-term goal, but it is best not to give an example, so you do not influence the kinds of goal the students will choose. Ask the students to write the goal down at the top of a sheet of paper (flipchart is best). (About five minutes).

Explain the LADDER AND SNAKES exercise (see Practice Teacher Notes). Give the students a copy of the completed exercise (*I Want To Go On Holiday*) by way of an example. Ask the students to complete their own LADDER AND SNAKES on the flipchart, in relation to their own goal. What steps would be necessary to get to their goal? This gets best results working in pairs, helping each other for about fifteen to twenty minutes each.

Display the flipchart sheets and discuss the students' work. Encourage the students to make links between this work which has focused on their personal lives and their work with clients.

Variations

Variety brings this activity to life. The student can see how different kinds of goal (long-term/short-term, global/specific, etc) influence the length of the step-ladder and the likelihood of reaching the top rung. After the student has spent time thinking about the pathways to the various goals, it is important to make connections with the work with service users, residents or carers.

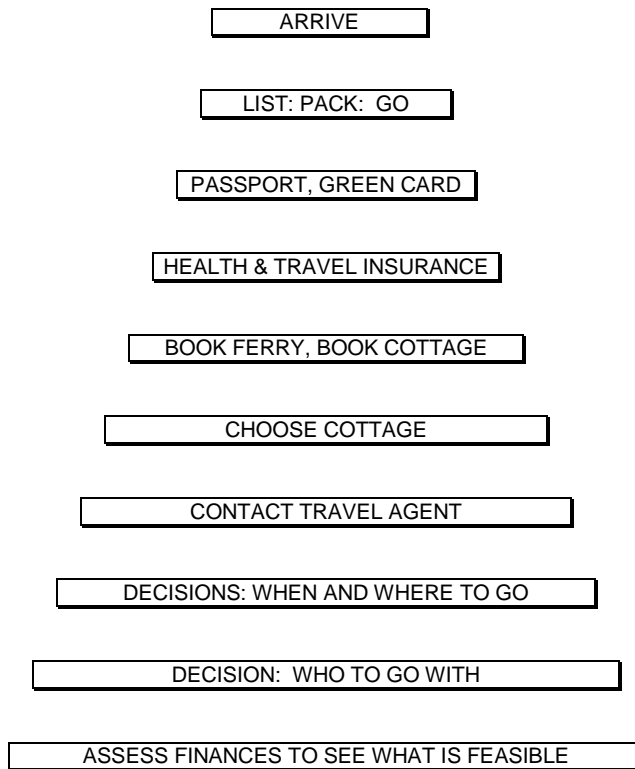
Goals - agreeing and achieving them **LADDER AND SNAKES Activity**

Each step towards reaching the goal is represented by a rung on the ladder and there can be any number of rungs to each ladder. Each potential obstacle is represented by a snake; include any obstacles which might delay your progress towards the goal and discuss how you might find a way around each of these snakes.

Below is an example LADDER AND SNAKES, using a typical goal - *I want to go on holiday*. Each rung represents tasks which you might identify as necessary for progress towards the goal. Each snake shows obstacles along the way. There can be as many rungs to the ladder and as many snakes as you care to identify.

I WANT TO GO ON HOLIDAY

Additions to goal: (after rung 3) ... *TO FRANCE FOR TWO WEEKS*



(Problem: I'M TIRED AND I HAVEN'T HAD A BREAK THIS YEAR)

Consider a personal goal which you would like to achieve. It can be large or small, serious or frivolous. Use the LADDER AND SNAKES approach to track the steps which will be necessary to achieve the goal and identify the most likely obstacles.

Introducing yourself **DEAR MRS SUNDERLAND,**

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This activity helps the student to understand that the process of intervention and assessment starts from the very beginning of contact, including the writing of a letter of appointment.

In order to prepare for the first encounter with people it is important to try to anticipate their likely feelings and thoughts. This sense of anticipation is sometimes called 'tuning in', and it requires time and rehearsal to become an integral part of the student's practice.

Method

The student reads the brief background to Mrs Sunderland's case and writes a letter of introduction on the basis of this information.

The student then reads the four letters and discusses with the practice teacher the merits and disadvantages of each one.

The student re-writes their introductory letter and discusses the original and the revised letters with the practice teacher, explaining the reason for the revisions, or lack of them. (About one hour total).

Variations

Dear Mrs Sunderland, can be adapted to various situations. In informal settings, such as a Drop-In Centre, parallel exercises can be developed to help the student think about the feelings clients or users are likely to have as they approach the Centre. The student, as somebody new to the Centre, is in a good position to monitor how somebody new to the Centre might feel. For example, is the front door well signed? What kind of 'signals' does the building give off? Who or what is likely to greet the newcomer? What is the likely response of old hands to a new face?

It is fairly simple to devise an audio-taped method of simulating initial encounters. Tape four or five brief audio vignettes which reflect the agency's work and portray 'door step responses' to the student's arrival. For example, you might tape yourself as an older person saying, 'thank goodness you've come - I need loads of shopping and there's dust all over the place.' The student listens to the audio-tape, then comments or writes about what they would then say or do.

Introducing yourself
DEAR MRS SUNDERLAND, Activity

Mr and Mrs Sunderland are in their eighties and have daily help from a home warden. You are the new worker. Their previous worker, Carmen Rainier, was unable to introduce you personally to the Sunderlands before she left, but promised that you would write a letter of introduction. The case notes are brief, but you read of complaints relayed via the warden that Mr Sunderland has struck his wife on two occasions, but no note of this being discussed. Mr Sunderland has complained about damp in the council flat and Carmen has written a memo to the Housing Department about this.

- First:** write your own letter of introduction and DON'T READ ANY FURTHER YET
Next: discuss the four introductory letters below
Last: re-write your own letter in the light of this discussion

Edith Sunderland,
 1, Evry St.,
 Town. 15th November

Dear Edith,
 I'll be in your neighbourhood and I'd like to pop in to say hello and talk about the damp. If there are any other problems, it'll be fine to talk about those, too. I can also bring some info about local day centres and volunteer help groups.
 I hope Tuesday the 17th at about 3 in the afternoon suits; look forward to seeing you then. Don't wait in specially; I'll call back if you're out.

Chris Brown

Mr and Mrs Sunderland,
 1, Every St.,
 Town, TN3 8YB 10th Nov.

Dear Mr and Mrs Sunderland,

I am Pat Jones and I am a student social worker at Town Social Services, where Carmen Rainier used to work. Carmen asked if I could get in touch, and I wonder if it would be convenient for me to call on Tuesday (the 17th) at 3.00 p.m? I'm looking forward to meeting you both and I hope I can be of help.

Pat Jones,
 Student social worker

Ms Edith Sunderland, CONFIDENTIAL
 c/o the Day Centre,
 Another Street,
 Town TN2 6AR 10th November

Dear Ms Sunderland,

Carmen Rainier mentioned your difficulties with your husband and asked if I could make contact to see if I can help in any way.

I will be calling at the Day Centre on Tuesday afternoon and Aisha Ryan is happy for us to use the quiet room if you'd like to talk things over. Aisha can join us if you'd like that.

I look forward to meeting you on Tuesday.
 Yours sincerely,

Jay Khan
 Social worker (student)

Mr and Mrs P Sunderland,
 1, Every Street,
 Town, TN3 8YB 3rd November

Dear Mr and Mrs Sunderland,

I work in the same office as Ms Rainier, who left for another post. Unfortunately, she had some crises in her last week, so could not introduce me to you personally.

I know you are experiencing some difficulties and I would like to call to see if there is anything I can do. Perhaps we can look at your problems, focus on one and work to achieve a goal?

Please telephone to tell me if it's convenient to call on 17 November at 3.00pm.

Yours faithfully,

P. Smith Social Worker C. Boss Supervisor

Introduction

PLAYING FIELD

INTRODUCTION

Playing field focuses on the student's understanding of what is 'in touch' and what is 'out of touch', in terms of the initial contacts with a potential client of the agency. It helps the student consider the areas of uncertainty (the 'grey' areas), and also how the person's concerns, problems and requests must be set in a broader framework.

Purpose

Students need to develop a good sense of the scope of work of the agency where they are placed. *Playing field* uses a games metaphor to help the student consider when work is 'in' or 'out' of play. It is not especially difficult when the ball is in the centre of the agency's concerns or well outside this area; it is more problematic when it is on the margins, and in those circumstances when there is a clash of professional conduct and agency procedure.

Method

The student should consider their work with a particular person, family or group. It helps if this can be a relatively complex situation, where each of the four sectors of the playing field are relevant.

How does, or did, the student work with the different concerns. In particular, how do they identify what is in the agency's remit, and what happened to those concerns which were outside the remit?

Discuss with the student whether there were there any disagreements or conflicts about which part of the field a particular concern lay in. (About 1 hour total).

Variations

In the first instance, students should do this activity retrospectively, taking a situation with which they are now more familiar. They should then return to *Playing field* at the initial stage in their work with a new service user.

It helps to develop your own case example for the student to work with. In this way, you can ensure that there are concerns, problems or requests in each of the four sectors. You can introduce situations which are controversial, with plenty of activity in the grey areas.

Contact with practice teachers and students in other settings gives students an opportunity to consider how different agencies define their own playing fields, and how strongly or faintly they paint the lines of demarcation.

Introduction
PLAYING FIELD Activity

Consider your work with one particular person, if possible where each of the four sections in the box below applies.

Write just one example of a concern, problem or request in each quadrant.

CONCERNS, PROBLEMS or REQUESTS . . .

Grey area	... identified by the person and which ARE in the agency's playing field	... identified by you and which ARE in the agency's playing field	Grey area
	... identified by the person but which are NOT in the agency's playing field	... identified by you but which are NOT in the agency's playing field	
↓		↓	
?		?	
In whose playing fields did the concerns in the bottom two sections belong?			

Meetings skills

TOPICAL ISLANDS

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Meetings are an important forum for the exchange of information and ideas. Decisions are made in meetings which have a considerable effect on the student's work. A meeting is an opportunity for the student to make an impact, but it can also feel frustrating and intimidating if it is not run properly. This activity introduces the student to a twelve-point framework for running a meeting; as a participant or as a chairperson, the activity gives the student a basis to judge good practice.

Method

Ask the student to identify meetings they have attended during the last week. There may be gatherings which the student has not perceived as *meetings*, so it is useful to look at different kinds of meeting. Walk the student through the *Topical islands* schedule, checking their understanding and discussing what it can mean in practice. (Allow 15 - 20 minutes).

Arrange for the student to be an observer at a meeting, using the *Topical islands* schedule to evaluate the meeting. The student should repeat this process in a meeting where they are a participant, then - ideally - where they have a chance to chair a meeting. In the latter instance, it helps to video the meeting, with participants' consent.

Use the practice tutorial to review the student's use of the *Topical islands* schedule. How has their experience of using the schedule influenced their thinking about meetings? Has it changed what they actually *do* in meetings? (About 30 minutes).

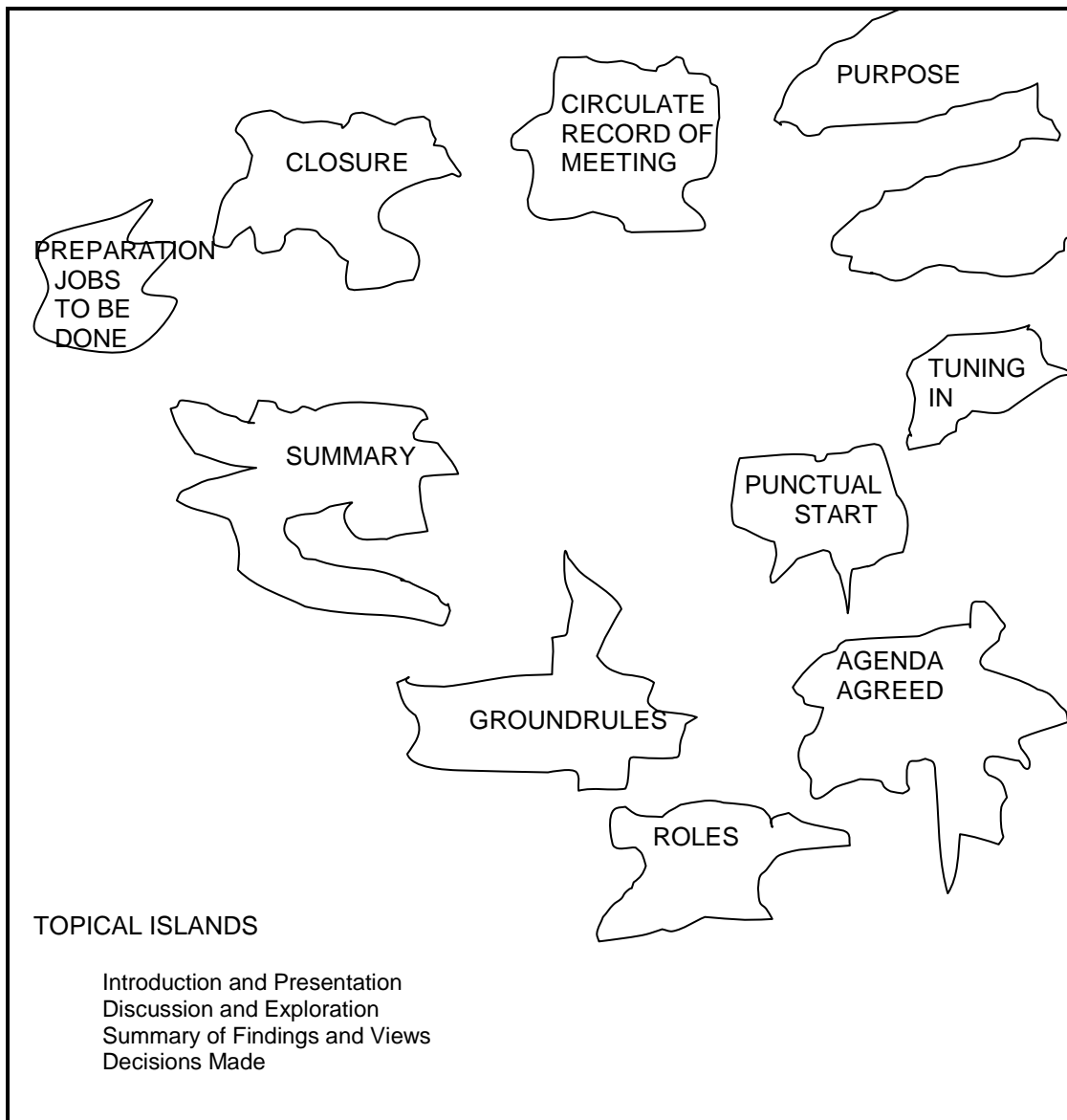
Variations

The definition of *meeting* is not clear-cut and there are many links with small groupwork. Team meetings, case conferences, residents' meetings, support groups, all have elements which related to the *Topical islands* schedule. There may be great variations in the climate of different meetings (for example, the formality or informality) but the essential steps from preparation to closure remain the same. It is interesting for the student to experience different kinds of meeting and to see if the purpose of a meeting gets reflected in the way the meeting is run.

Meetings skills
TOPICAL ISLANDS Activity

The map below represents twelve stages to help a meeting achieve its purposes. The map does not necessarily show the relative size or importance of each stage in any particular meeting. The islands follow a rough sequence, but most meetings are characterized by both *linear movement* from topic to topic, and *circular* movement, with eddies of discussion around each topic explored in detail.

Use *Topical islands* as a kind of board game to analyze the progress of a meeting. Try it out first in a meeting where the practice teacher is a participant and where the student is an observer. This way, both of you experience the same meeting, with the student able to focus on the *Topical islands* activity rather than having to contribute to the meeting.



When you are familiar with the way this activity works, do a *Topical islands* sheet for a meeting where you are a participant or, better still, the chairperson.

Orientation to the practice learning site

WHO TAKES THE SUGAR?

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Finding your way around a new place is seldom easy. Remind yourself of when you started a new job and you will have an idea of how students feels when they start a placement. The purpose of this activity is to help students to orientate themselves to the placement as quickly as possible in a way that reflects the active way in which they will be learning to practise throughout the placement.

Method

This is an activity best done by students on their own and it can be introduced on the first day.

The purpose of the activity needs to be carefully explained as:

- an example of the kind of activity the student will be doing
- a means to see how the student completes a task
- a fun way to feel at home and find out about the placement

Tell students what your expectations are - you expect them to complete most of the questions, but there may be a few they have not been able to find out. (This introduction should take about 15 minutes).

Arrange a time later the next day to find out how students are getting on. You are not expecting them to have completed everything by then, but it will give you both an opportunity to see if there are any major difficulties. (5-10 minutes, but more time needed if the student is finding difficulties).

Arrange a time three or four days into the placement to review the student's work on the Orientation exercise. (About 30 minutes).

Variations

This activity can be used in any setting, though the questions need to be tailored to the specific placement. When devising a similar exercise, ask yourself which people and places are likely to be significant for the student during the placement, so you can construct appropriate questions. Are you going to have 'true-false' questions or open ones? How far are the questions going to focus on the 'inside' or lead the student into the community?

You will need to consider whether to consult people in advance; you want this to be a positive experience for the student and not everybody takes kindly to questioning.

Orientation to the practice learning site

WHO TAKES THE SUGAR? in Oakbrook Home

True False

- The oldest resident is Ivy Pinner
- The friends of Oakbrook raised £1,500 last year
- The hairdressers visit on Fridays
- The *Red Lion* pub has a ramp to the side door
- The senior staff group decide how to spend the annual budget
- Relatives can visit residents at any time
- There are no black residents
- The deputy principal is the only fully qualified first-aider
- There are no vegetarian residents
- Ann is the only staff member who takes sugar in her tea

WHO WEARS THE SANDALS? in the community

- Where is the nearest Post Office?
- How long is the waiting list for a place at the local Day Nursery?
- How does the user committee at the Day Centre for physically handicapped people work?
- How much does it cost to hire a room at the Community Centre?
- How many Asian home helps work in the area?
- What different kinds of care does Oakbrook Elderly Persons' Home offer?
- Where are the foster homes in the area?
- When is the Rights and Advice Centre open and how does it get its funding?
- What are the average waiting times for council tenancies in our area?
- Who wears the sandals?

Priorities

STICKY MOMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Sticky moments takes a number of incidents or situations similar to ones which students will experience during the placement. Students are asked to make priorities in relation to these incidents and to think about the criteria which they have used to make these priorities.

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to encourage students to think about how they make decisions when there are conflicting priorities. Too often, these kinds of decisions are made without an awareness of the knowledge, values and beliefs which underpin them. This activity makes these factors explicit and teaches students a framework which will help them to continue to review the way they make decisions.

Method

The activity can be done by two people (you and the student) or by a small group of practice teachers and students. A group of students in different settings (group care and field work, for example), can address both parts of the activity, which provides interesting contrasts.

Students should study *Sticky moments* before the practice tutorial. Ask them to prepare whichever of the two situations relates best to their own setting. The three questions at the bottom of the exercise apply to both settings. Students should write down their responses to these questions.

In the practice tutorial, ask students to describe their responses to the three questions, using their prepared written notes. Subsequent discussion should focus on the *criteria which* the student developed. (45-60 minutes.)

Write the criteria up on a piece of flipchart paper, adding your own and any further criteria which come out of the discussion.

Decide on priorities for these criteria; re-write them in this new order on a fresh piece of flipchart paper.

Finally, use these newly ordered criteria to look at the six situations again. How do they change or confirm the student's original priorities?

Variations

You can use the 'Sticky moments' format to prepare six situations which reflect the specific kind of work which the student does in your setting. If you create your own 'Sticky moments', remember that your aim is to provide an opportunity for students to think carefully about the criteria they might use when confronted with choices; you are not seeking to simulate a realistic moment in the life of the unit or the kind of in-tray the student is likely to have to deal with. Each separate situation or referral is realistic, but it is unlikely they would all happen together.

Priorities

STICKY MOMENTS . . .

. . . . in Oakbrook Home

Mary (aged 91) has wet herself.

Harry (76) is having an argument with Kathleen (79) who is very frail and deaf. Harry has a stick and is hitting the wall with it.

A member of staff puts the tea and biscuits out on the trolley and tells you she is going out 'for a few minutes'.

The telephone rings in the office.

The emergency buzzer from the bathroom is sounding.

Avis (88) keeps crying 'Out!', 'Out!' and is heading for the front door.

. . . . in the team's in-tray

A *Referred by Parents*

Mr and Mrs Appleyard are concerned about their eldest daughter (15), who is truanting persistently and 'mixing with bad company.' They want a social worker to visit to 'give her a good talking to.'

B *Referred by a local Councillor*

Councillor requesting help for Mr and Mrs Brzynski who have increasing problems coping with a mentally handicapped daughter, (41). 'All their requests for help have been ignored'. Mrs B. is in reception.

C *Referred by General Practitioner*

Doctor Chaduri is concerned about Mrs Clark (63), whose mother (84) lives with her and is confused, incontinent and increasingly demanding. Mrs Clark is 'getting to the end of her tether'.

D *Referred by anonymous Neighbour*

The caller claims that her near neighbour, Trisha Davies, a single parent, has left her children alone in the house for over an hour several times recently. The children are 4 and 7.

E *Referred by himself, via a Probation Officer*

Tony Ezeshi, a single parent with four children between 9 and 16, has rent arrears and is on the verge of an electricity disconnection. He referred himself to Probation who say they can't help; can we?

F *Referred by Consultant Psychiatrist*

Mr Francis, a divorcee living alone, was discharged from psychiatric hospital two months ago. The consultant wants a social worker to visit because Mr Francis is becoming depressed and drinking again.

Questions

- 1 What priority would you give to these six situations / referrals?
- 2 What further information would you like to gather before taking action?
- 3 What criteria have you used to help you decide your position?

With acknowledgements to Penny Forshaw, Mary Gardiner and Matt Bukowski

Recording the work

MATTER OF FACT

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

There are many different purposes for recording in social work practice. This activity helps students to think critically about the language used in social work recording, to improve the meaning of their records and to consider writing records as an integral part of the work with people.

Method

This Activity can be done by a practice teacher and student together or by a group of practice teachers and students. A group of students who are placed in different kinds of setting produces a variety of perspectives.

No preparation needs to be done before the practice tutorial. Each person needs a copy of the *Matter of fact* page.

Each written statement, taken from actual files and records, should be addressed in turn, with suggestions about which of the client responses might fit best. Students and practice teachers should discuss what meaning is conveyed by the statement and what they think it says about the writer. Relate this discussion to the recording practices in your agency and the student's record writing so far. Allow about 30 minutes.

Variations

Matter of fact presents a Top 20 of cliches common to most social work settings; indeed, they have been taken from various case files and day books. You may wish to collect your agency's own Top 20 (for example, a medical or psychiatric social work placement will have its own brand of jargon to add to the set in *Matter of fact*). A list of acronyms would also be a useful way of demonstrating how professional language can exclude clients and obscure meanings.

Recording the work MATTER OF FACT Activity

The comments in the left column have come from case files, reports or day books. They illustrate some of social work's favourite phrases. Perhaps you can add to this Top 20?

The comments to the right are responses as they might appear in the service user's own case books, if they were to keep them. Apart from the first four examples, the case records and the service users' responses are scrambled. Which service users' comments might you match to which social work records?

Shirley is very <i>manipulative</i>	I know how to play the system
Yusef is <i>easily led</i>	I don't know how to play the system
Julie indulges in <i>promiscuous behaviour</i>	I have a lot of sexual partners
Karl is <i>testing the boundaries</i>	I have a lot of sexual partners

Trisha is <i>aggressive and self-centred</i>	I don't know how to ask for what I want
Mrs Khan presents in a <i>hostile manner</i>	I don't know how to show my son, either
There is an ongoing <i>conflict situation</i>	We don't know what to do with him
He is <i>an inadequate</i>	I don't like your rules and I want out
He is <i>an inadequate role model</i> for his son	I feel racism a lot of the time
The family has a lot of <i>inner resources</i>	I don't like what you want me to do
They have <i>rejected</i> him	We fight like cat and dog
He is a difficult <i>problem case</i>	I don't trust you
Mr Davy is a <i>needy, dependent enuretic</i>	You don't know what to do with him
Samantha is an <i>acting-out attention seeker</i>	I wish I could do more for myself
Sean must prove he <i>responds to structure</i>	You don't have my taste in jokes or clothes
Winston is <i>over-sensitive</i> about colour	English is not my first language
George <i>represses his emotions</i>	I know how to ask for what I want
Mr Pradish is <i>uncommunicative</i>	We get through despite everything
Polly is very <i>demanding</i>	I know very well how to ask what I want
Claire laughs and dresses <i>inappropriately</i>	Nobody takes any notice of me

What meaning does each statement convey to you?

What kinds of knowledge, values and beliefs does it suggest the writer holds?

Reflective practice

SIGNPOSTS

INTRODUCTION

The journey from Observation to Action is often made quickly, instinctively and - more riskily - often without reflection. *Signposts* is a way of slowing down that journey, to inspect the component parts and to reflect on these. You can focus in more detail on any one aspect - for example, to consider how research-minded the practice is.

Purpose

This chapter is designed to help students to reflect on the way they 'put their practice together' and to dispel the mystique associated with research and 'putting theory into practice'. It scrutinizes the processes which affect the practitioner's judgment in turning observations into action. Formal research is only one of these many processes, and it is likely to take a junior role compared to action based on the observer's past observations, feelings, value base, and so on.

The meeting point of research and practice is one of the most fraught locations on the social work map. All too often, practitioners' complaints that research findings never tell them what they do not already know are matched by researchers' criticisms that practice is based on professional folk lore. The chapter aims to put research on the student's map by helping students consider how they theorise from their own practice experiences.

Method

Both you and the student should consider (independently) one specific observation which you made during a mutual contact with a client. This need not be the one which you thought was the most striking, but it should be one which influenced your subsequent action. It should be a very specific observation.

Make notes around the eight panels signposted as leading from Observation to Action in the *Signposts* activity. Comments should be brief and specific to the one observation which you are focusing on. End with the specific Action taken.

When you have completed the exercise compare notes. This kind of scrutiny enables you both to reflect on factors which influenced your actions which you were not necessarily aware of at the time. You can focus on particular panels, e.g. the Values panel, or the Research panel - how prominent was it? At what stage in the process did it have an impact, if at all?

Variations

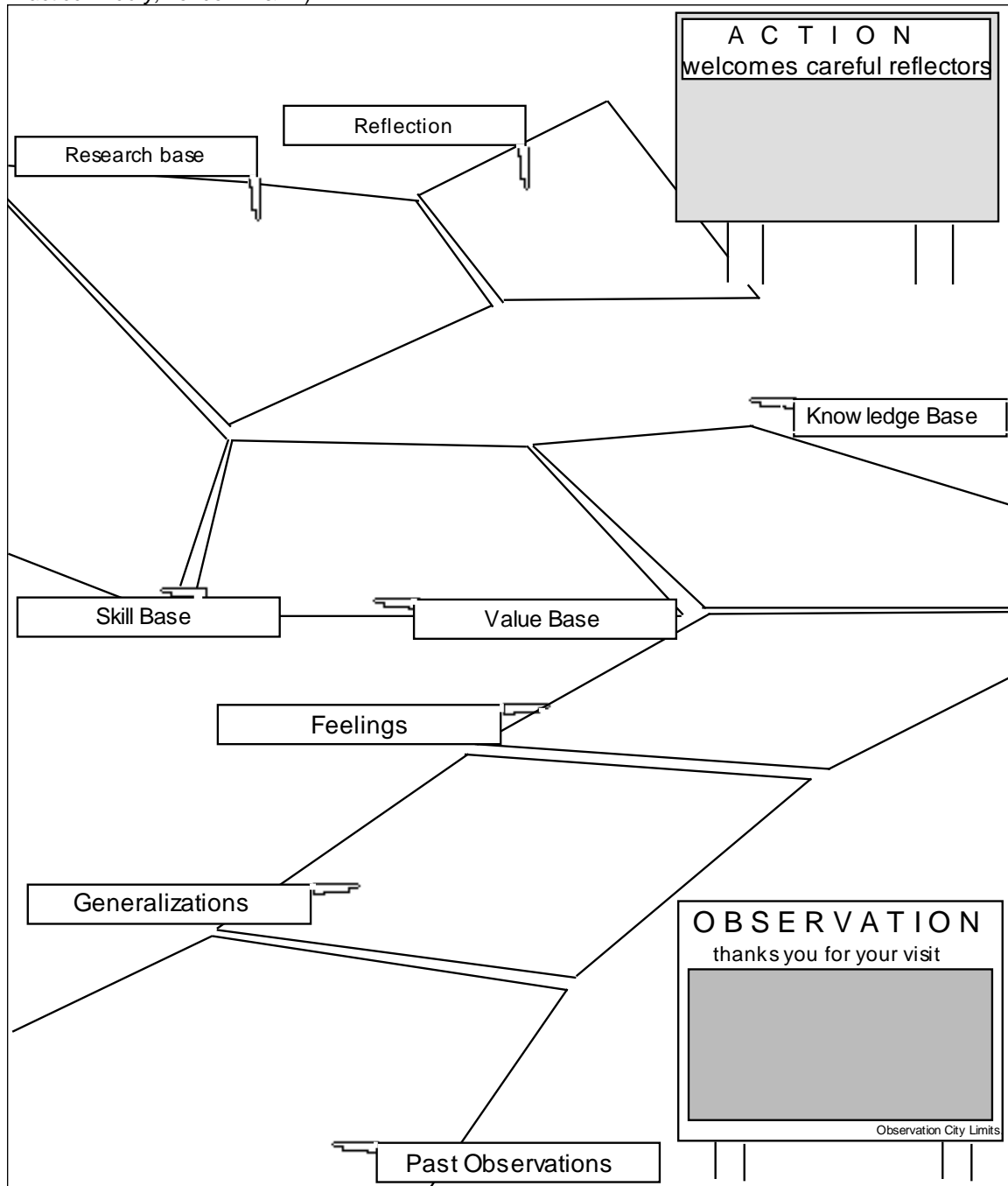
The journey from Observation to Action is not as linear as *Signposts*. For the purposes of the activity, the eight processes headlined in *Signposts* are shown as following one from the other, but the journey itself is made in a much more circuitous way, revisiting some stages and probably neglecting some of the others.

It is not possible to subject every action to this kind of detailed scrutiny, but if students can do this exercise a few times, they become aware of their own 'profile'. This helps them to develop their capacities as reflective practitioners and to develop a practice base which is research-minded.

The student who struggles with this activity might benefit from discussing the illustration in *New Social Work Practice*, but it is better not to begin with an example, because this taints the student's responses.

Reflective practice SIGNPOSTS Activity

'Practice theories are an assemblage of signposts which social workers have accumulated in the course of their work. These signposts are made up of a combination of explicit theoretical knowledge, practice wisdom, experience, feelings and observations. But the *process* by which all these ingredients are employed is little understood and it might be useful to think provisionally in terms of a cartographical analogy.' Curnock and Hardiker, 1979: 160 (*Towards Practice Theory*, London: R&KP)



Research-minded practice

DID YOU KNOW?

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The meeting point of research and practice is one of the most fraught locations on the social work map. All too often, practitioners complain that research findings never tell them what they do not already know are matched by researchers' criticisms that practice is based on professional folk lore. The purposes of this activity are modest: to put research on the student's map. This activity is designed to help students to become research *minded* in their practice, by being aware of their own preconceptions, so that they can at least begin to test them.

Method

No preparation is needed before you give the student a copy of *Did you know?* Make sure students know they will be reading the news cuttings a section at a time (numbered 1, 2 and 3) and that you will be discussing each section before moving on to the next.

Ask students for their first, unconsidered reaction to the reports, section by section. How does it fit any existing beliefs and knowledge that they hold about this subject - does it confirm or challenge them? Discuss different hypotheses which might explain the findings reported in the item; does the student have firm views about these explanations? How does the different information which comes to light in the next section of each report influence the student's views? (About twenty minutes for each account).

After you have discussed each of the three sections in both items, ask students to reflect on the process as a whole. How do they assimilate new information and what are their views about research in general?

Variations

The research findings in *Did you know?* are reported at a broad or 'macro' level. You may want to use the same technique (discussing reports of research findings in different stages) with material which is closer to home. Is there a piece of operational research conducted in your agency which the student should read? What research has had significance in the particular setting where the student is placed? *Did you know?* sensitizes students to the use and abuse of research, and to their own responses to research.

Research-minded practice

DID YOU KNOW? Activity

Read one section at a time and formulate your own hypotheses as possible explanations. How do your hypotheses change in response to the new information in each section?

LESS TRANSPLANTS FOR BLACK PEOPLE

1 Black Americans who need kidney transplants are significantly less likely to receive them than whites.

The conclusion, published in the New England Journal of Medicine by a group of transplant physicians, is the latest effort to address a trend that has troubled the medical profession for several years: Although black people are four times more vulnerable than whites to kidney failure, studies have shown that when transplants become available, they tend to go to white patients.

In 1985, only 21% of all kidney transplants went to blacks, even though they accounted for 28% of the patients with serious kidney disease, according to the Health Care Financing Administration. Figures from the United Network for Organ Sharing indicate that although blacks make up a third of the nearly 18,000 people on the national waiting list, they received only a fifth of the kidney transplants last year.

2 Previous studies have theorized that subconscious bias might account for the inequity in transplant rates.

But Thursday's report - a

review of existing data by a committee of the American Society of Transplant Physicians - concluded that "it is likely that both biological and socio-economic differences between blacks and whites contribute to this inequality."

"We never found anywhere that there is any wilful discrimination against blacks or other minorities," said Dr. Jaroslav Havel, a co-author of the study and a professor of medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Rather, Havel said, the little hard evidence available points to a variety of complex factors, ranging from a lack of health insurance among blacks to differences in blood types that make many black patients incompatible with the majority of organs in the donor pool.

For example, the study found, white families are two or three times more likely than blacks to donate a deceased relative's organs for transplantation.

Blacks have a much higher incidence of hypertension and diabetes that can result in kidney failure and thus are over-represented on the waiting list for

kidney transplants. But because of genetic differences in blood and tissue

types, many black people cannot accept organs taken from whites; they have to compete for a much smaller organ pool.

"We strongly feel that the differences could be improved if we could encourage donations by racial minorities," Havel said.

3 Another possible factor, the study found, may have to do with variations in insurance coverage. Although Medicare pays much of the cost of transplants for most people, it does not offer complete coverage in every state. Poorer blacks may be unable to afford the remaining costs, and may therefore be considered less suitable candidates for transplants, the study noted.

Other factors may have to do with whether a patient is a good risk for a transplant, the physicians found. For example, the study noted, doctors may not offer transplants to black patients because they may suspect them of alcohol and drug abuse, which would undermine surgery.

"The prevalence of heroin abuse may be higher in blacks than in whites," the authors explained.

adapted from Shawn Hubler

EMILY ASSERTS HER MANHOOD

1 Parents who name their daughters Sophie or Emily in the hope of encouraging a feminine personality may instead turn out gender rebels who will reject conventional sex roles, psychologists said yesterday.

For parents with sons, avoiding the name Nigel makes good psychological sense as people cannot agree whether it is has macho or wimp associations.

Psychologists Carol Johnson and Helen Petrie, of Sussex University, surveyed the perceived masculinity and femininity of names and whether these could influence personality.

2 For women, but to a much lesser extent for men, names appeared important in shaping personality. Women either embraced the feminine stereotypes suggested by their names or rebelled, shortening them to "unisex" versions, such as Chris for Christine, or adopting male versions, such as Alex for Alexandra or Charlie for Charlotte.

Ms Johnson told the annual conference of the British Psychological Society that 255 students had found little difficulty in assessing the masculinity or femininity of 86 names - with the exception of Nigel.

"The lack of agreement on Nigel surprised us. There are two different stereotypes in Great Britain about Nigel," says Ms Johnson. "One is very upper class such as the actor Nigel

Havers, and the other is an Essex Man figure such as racing driver Nigel Mansell."

The researchers found that the most feminine name was seen as Sophie, and the most masculine as John. Lee was judged the most unisex.

The students were given personality tests to assess masculine and feminine attributes. Women with highly feminine names had more feminine personalities, while those who had abbreviated their names showed more masculine characteristics.

3 "Our study suggests that it is women who refuse society's sex role orientation who are using their diminutive names as one way of indicating this rejection.

"Giving a daughter a highly feminine name may have an enduring effect on her personality. Amongst our subjects there were no boys named Sue but there were girls named George, Cecil and Jack."

from Chris Mihill, *The Guardian*

Supervision and reflective practice

REFLECTIONS ON SUPERVISION

INTRODUCTION

Reflections on supervision is a trigger to encourage both practice teacher and student to examine their expectations about the content and functions of supervision. The practice tutorial (supervision session) is the linchpin of the student's learning and the assessment of their practice abilities, yet it has complex purposes and may reflect very different understandings of these purposes.

Purpose

Supervision and Reflective Practice is concerned with the way in which supervision is put to use. There are a number of different functions and purposes which need to be untangled, otherwise it is difficult to achieve the best use of the practice tutorial.

Method

Ask the student to read *Reflections on supervision*, explaining that each of the 25 statements is taken from a collection of articles on supervision (*Community Care*, 1992)

Ask the student to make a quick response to each statement, pencilling a number from 0-10 to indicate their responses (from 0= strongly disagree to 10=strongly agree). (Blue coloured circles around statements from 0-3, green from 4-6 and red from 7-10 will give an immediate, graphic summary of the student's views). Do the exercise yourself, too.

Where are the student's highest scores?

A grouping of high scores towards the top of the page (i.e. more red circles in this area), indicates an emphasis on the managerial and administrative functions.

Highest scores in the middle region suggest a focus on the educational and developmental functions.

High scores in the bottom third of the page indicate most concern for the supportive and nurturing functions.

How do the students' clusters of scores compare to your own?

Variations

If you ask the student to complete *Reflections on supervision* early and late in the placement, you can gauge if there has been any change in emphasis as a result of the experience of the placement. It is also an opportunity to get feedback from students about your supervision style and practice, and to explore any wide differences in your expectations.

Supervision and reflective practice

SUPERVISION REFLECTIONS Activity

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Rate each one from 0-strongly disagree to 10-strongly agree

Supervision means being able to demonstrate that what is expected from the student is actually achieved. 1	Supervision is where objectives and tasks are agreed to produce a required level of service. 2	Supervision must ensure that clients get an even service. 3	Assessment is a major area of the supervisor's role. 4
Supervision must ensure that the best use is made of the skills, time, and resources available. 7	Having created a trusting relationship, the practice teacher should use supervision to present the priorities, philosophies and policies of the agency. 6	The needs of the client should be the starting point for all the work done in supervision. 5	It is important to draw up a contract which acknowledges the joint expectations of student and practice teacher. 11
Student and practice teacher have shared responsibility to ensure supervision sessions take place. 8	As supervision requires two parties with unequal power to make an effective working relationship, issues of values, rights, responsibilities, and goals have to be explored. 10	Supervision enables students to consider different ways of handling situations. 13	Supervision acts as a powerful role model for the management of difference and the use and abuse of authority. 14
Supervision is intended as guided self-observation which gives shape to that which the student experiences as fragmented. 9	Supervision provides the opportunity to look at work critically in a way that is professionally developmental. 15	The practice teacher should create a climate that enables and empowers the student to talk about thorny issues, especially race and racism. 12	Supervision is a helicopter that lifts from danger. 20
Supervision is a deep well from which to draw strength and wisdom. 17	Practice teachers must establish how the student learns and adapt according to that style. 16	Supervision is not about giving false reassurance, but providing an opportunity to replenish and motivate students, valuing their strengths, effort and commitment. 18	Supervision is the student's most essential helping relationship. 21
Supervision is a warm wall to give support in bouncing ideas off. 23	Good practice teaching, as well as being stimulating, can also be painful. 19	A practice teacher who says: "just tell me about the case," invites unconscious misrepresentation as to what went on between the student and client, therefore invalidating the whole thrust of the session. 22	The practice teacher can help the student to discover how, in the implementation of the rules and policies, the victim inside the student may have colluded with the victim inside the client. 25
Supervision is a warm wall to give support in bouncing ideas off. 23	The practice teacher should be able to say "I don't know." 24		

The statements above are taken, in a modified form, from 'Staff Supervision' in *Community Care*, 30/7/92. Contributors were: Jean Moore, 'Staff supervision: are you satisfied?'; Tony Morrison, 'A question of survival'; Chris Payne, 'A map for different models'; Elizabeth Ash, 'Piggy in the middle'; Jane Metcalf and Clive Curtis, 'Feeding on support'; Anne Hollows, 'Resources for courses'; Joy Francis, 'Results without racism'

Workload management

PERFECT TIMING

INTRODUCTION

Perfect timing consists of a set of twenty-four different activities which a student might have to fit into a working week. The student and practice teacher each construct a diary for the week ahead, incorporating the twenty-four activities. They discuss the criteria they used to manage the time.

Purpose

The purpose of this exercise is to look at the ways in which students organize their work within the working week. A set of demands and constraints which mirror the student's work on the placement are used to discover the principles which can be used to manage a workload.

Method

This activity can be completed by a practice teacher and student together or by a small group of practice teachers and students. It achieves particularly good results with one practice teacher and two or three students. Give the students a set of *Perfect timing* cards (either print the page and cut out the cards, or create your own tailor-made set - see Variations below).

Before the practice tutorial, you and the student should separately organize the same set of demands (the twenty-four activity cards) into a manageable working week. (Allow 20 minutes.)

At the practice tutorial, or in the small group, compare your 'diaries' for the forthcoming week, discussing the reasons for your decisions. The exercise can be made more or less difficult by the number of activities you put into the pack. You can upset careful planning by producing rogue cards (unexpected activities) *after* the diary has been organized. (About 30 - 60 minutes).

Variations

Perfect timing is an activity can be tailored to your particular setting, so use this one as an example. You can prepare for this before the student's placement begins by making a note on separate cards of different demands made on your time. Note what the demand was (e.g. a visit to a single parent to discuss financial problems) and the length of time set aside for each demand. If the demand had to be met at a specific day or time (such as a team meeting on Wednesday from 9.30-10.30) make a note of the details on the card. Small, repeated demands, like telephone calls and re-dials, can be totalled (for example five outgoing telephone calls, with estimated time taken). If the students' work takes them outside the home base, find a map of the area with bus routes if needed.

The pace of time in informal settings, such as group care and drop-in centres, is different from the pace in more formal settings, such as field social work and probation practice. Making use of unstructured time may be a key skill in informal settings, and a similar diary exercise can be used to log the use of time.

The amount of time taken to complete visits to locations outside of the office can vary considerably accord to the means of transport available to your student - car, cycle, bus, train - or even walking! Take account of these differences according to local circumstance and the student's access to differing forms of transport. Other factors to be taken into account might include the distance from the office to the car park, if this is notable, and the time needed to park a car in a busy area.

Towards the end of the placement, you might wish to make a new set of *Perfect timing* cards (or encourage the student to do so) and repeat the exercise as completed earlier in the placement. Students can be asked to consider how their organization of time on the placement has been influenced by their experiences of the agency. Are there any changes in they would like to make in the way they manage time and workload?

On the next page are twenty-four Activity Cards. Arrange the activities into a working week. The office is about a mile from the clinic and street addresses are within ten minutes' walk of a bus route. Central office and the court are four miles away, 20-30 minutes by bus.

What criteria do you use to decide how you will plan your week ahead?

Workload management
PERFECT TIMING Activity

<p>ONE HOUR LUNCH EACH DAY</p> <p>Mon.-Fri. 1 hour <i>Anywhere</i></p>	<p>VISIT TO ASSESS ELDERLY PERSON FOR RESPITE CARE</p> <p>est: 45 mins <i>Brick Street</i></p>	<p>COURT REPORT ON JUVENILE OFFENDER</p> <p>written by Tuesday est: 2 hours <i>Office</i></p>	<p>COURT APPEARANCE</p> <p>some time during Friday morning est: not known <i>Court</i></p>
<p>TEAM MEETING</p> <p>Wednesday weekly 9.30-10.30 <i>Office</i></p>	<p>5 OUTGOING TELEPHONE CALLS</p> <p>est: 30 mins. <i>Office</i></p>	<p>WORKING PARTY ON COMMUNITY CARE</p> <p>Wednesday fortnight 2.00-3.30 <i>Central Office</i></p>	<p>VISIT SINGLE PARENT - FINANCIAL PROBLEMS</p> <p>est: 1 hour <i>Slinn Street</i></p>
<p>10 INCOMING TELEPHONE CALLS</p> <p>est: 1 hour <i>Office</i></p>	<p>VISIT ELDERLY MAN WANTING COUNCIL ACCOMMODATION</p> <p>est: 45 mins. <i>Conduit Rd</i></p>	<p>DISCUSS TEENAGE MOTHERS' GROUP WITH HEALTH VISITOR</p> <p>est: 1 hour <i>Clinic</i></p>	<p>5 OUTGOING TELEPHONE CALLS (including re-dials) est: 30 mins. <i>Office</i></p>
<p>REVIEW ON CHILD IN FOSTER CARE</p> <p>Tuesday 2.00-3.00 <i>Hill Lane</i></p>	<p>PRACTICE MEETING WITH LOCAL HEALTH CARE STAFF</p> <p>Friday, weekly 1.30-2.30 <i>Clinic</i></p>	<p>VISIT CONFUSED ELDERLY WOMAN, SEE DAUGHTER</p> <p>est: 1 hour <i>Hands Road</i></p>	<p>MEET WITH MOTHER, CHILD, STAFF AT DAY NURSERY</p> <p>est: 1 hour <i>Beet Street</i></p>
<p>2 RECORD SUMMARIES, 3 LETTERS, 2 MEMOS</p> <p>est: 1 hour <i>Office</i></p>	<p>5 INCOMING TELEPHONE CALLS</p> <p>est: 30 mins. <i>Office</i></p>	<p>2 RECORD SUMMARIES, 3 LETTERS, 2 MEMOS</p> <p>est: 1 hour <i>Office</i></p>	<p>PRACTICE TUTORIAL SESSION</p> <p>Thursday, weekly 9.30-11.00 <i>Office</i></p>
<p>VISIT TO FAMILY EXPERIENCING PROBLEMS</p> <p>est: 1 hour - evening <i>Elmore Road</i></p>	<p>CASE DISCUSSION WITH PART-TIME O.T.</p> <p>Tue., Wed. or Thu. est: 30 mins. <i>Clinic</i></p>	<p>STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP</p> <p>Friday, 1.00-2.30 (usually Thursdays, fortnightly) <i>Central Office</i></p>	<p>DAY DUTY</p> <p>Wednesday 9.00-12.30 <i>Office</i></p>

Worldviews

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

INTRODUCTION

Believe it or not explores social work from several different points of view. Brief quotations present examples of different views about social work. Students are invited to consider with which statements they agree.

Purpose

The reasons why people come into social work are numerous. Some have clear, well-rehearsed positions and others have difficulty identifying their motives and beliefs. Some subscribe to an '-ism' or two, and others have muddled views with no obvious guiding principles. We all have some kind of personal philosophy - ways of looking at the world and explaining it - but are we aware of what these are? The purpose of this activity is to help students get a better understanding of how the way they view the world influences their work; in other words, how beliefs interact with actions.

Method

This activity is best undertaken by a student and practice teacher jointly, or by a group of three or four students, but can be done individually. Give a clear explanation of the purpose of the exercise, emphasizing the exploratory aspects and making sure the student knows that there is no pressure to take up any particular position.

The student reads the various statements in the *Believe it or Not* activity and writes down responses to each of the statements (if a group of students are working together you can also then ask them to discuss their responses to these statements). Arrange a time when you can exchange comments (probably the next practice tutorial) and suggest that the student makes a few notes ready for this discussion.

Encourage the student to enter a dialogue about the statements and your mutual preferences. It is important to avoid preaching or trying to enforce a consensus; the discussion is an opportunity to share the ways you each view the world, and if these are not clear, an attempt to articulate previously unspoken worldviews.

Help the student to relate worldviews to social work practice. What are the implications of each of these statements for practice? How do different beliefs affect the choices social workers make about what they do? (About 1 hour in total.)

Variations

You can substitute different statements about social work from a wide variety of perspectives. The views expressed in this activity can easily be substituted for different kinds (e.g. Moslem, humanist). Alternatively, you can use different viewpoints about particular aspects of practice (for example child care, work with older people). In many respects, it is irrelevant which views are discussed with the student; the purpose of the activity is to for students to become aware of their own views by looking at the world as others see it.

You can use this activity at an early stage in a student's placement. It is also the type of activity that can be revisited using either the same or different extracts later in the placement to help students identify how their worldview has or has not changed.

A commentary on these extracts and their sources are to be found later. It is strongly suggested that you do not consult this appendix until you have completed the activity and had the opportunity for discussion.

Worldviews

BELIEVE IT OR NOT Activity

Consider the following FIVE brief extracts about social work, and ask yourself:

- Which if any of these statements do you agree with, and why?
- What are the ideological beliefs that underpin each of these statements?

ONE

The ruling class uses social work primarily to support and protect the expansion and legitimation of its power. The social services are provided for the subject class and its casualties, in order to improve the health and social functioning of the labour force, and to mitigate the worst effects of the structural inequalities. Social work is especially important in legitimating the values of the ruling class by its emphasis upon the socialisation process. Paradoxically, social work reinforces the underclass clientele's identity as irresponsible and immature.

TWO

In so far as there are common elements in social work, they are best described by the notion of *maintenance*: Society maintains itself in a relatively stable state by managing and making provision for people in positions of weakness, stress or vulnerability; society maintains its own members by virtue of social work's commitment to humanist endeavour, and its emphasis on the idea of respect for the client, optimism for the future, and faith in the essential, or at least potential, unity of society.

THREE

Although feminist theory offers an alternative theory of service delivery and method, it operates itself on a system of received ideas about women - a system without commonly agreed theoretical explanations or practical operational outcomes. Bluntly, feminism is ambiguous; it means very different things to different people. To this end, we would suggest that, like Marxism and the traditional approaches to social work, feminism offers a flawed approach. In particular it assumes a unanimity on the subject - women's oppression - which does not exist.

FOUR

There is a tendency in the social work profession to disengage social work practice from political debate and political advocacy. Yet, social work in itself is 'undeniably political'. This anomaly is usually couched in a liberal approach to social work, which may embrace the ideology of 'individual freedom' but need not concern itself with societal flaws that are fundamental barriers to individual freedom - barriers like sexism, racism, and other oppressions. A liberal social

worker gets so involved in the so-called 'individual freedom; that s/ he tends to accommodate *all* individuals, irrespective of their socio-economic, educational or cultural backgrounds, in his/ her pluralistic view of society. So the result is trying to please *everybody*'.

FIVE

Our present model of so-called client-centred social work is basically sound, but in need of a better defined and less ambitious mandate. Social work should be explicitly selective rather than universalist in focus, reactive rather than preventative in approach and modest in its objectives. Social work ought to be preventive with respect to the needs which come to its attention; it has neither the capacity, the resources nor the mandate to go looking for needs in the community at large.

THE EXTRACTS

Extract one

Leonard, P. (1976). The function of social work in society. In N. Timms & D. Watson (Eds.), *Talking about Welfare* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, page 261.

This extract is an expression of a Marxist analysis of society and social work. The writer sees social work as a mechanism for maintaining the existing order of society - an order that he regards as exploitative of the working class and therefore to be opposed. For a discussion of the practice implications of this view see Simpkin (1983), who advocates trade union activity for social workers.

Extract two

Davies, M. (1981). *The Essential Social Worker* (first ed.), Aldershot: Gower, p. 3.

In this extract, social work has a particular function to perform to maintain a stable society. This is a humanistic approach, and - in sociological terms - a functionalist approach. Social work is described as a benign influence, a force that will contribute something positive to the future. Contrast this with the previous extract.

Extract three

Rojeck, C., Peacock, G., & Collins, S. (eds.) (1988). *Social Work and Received Ideas*, London: Routledge, p. 113.

This extract does not make a positive statement about any aspect of social work, but criticises feminist thinking directly and Marxism indirectly. It suggests that feminist social work is grounded in an inaccurate sociological analysis.

Extract four

Ahmad, B. (1990). *Black Perspectives in Social Work*, Birmingham: Venture Press, p. 44.

This extract is written from a Black perspective and calls for social workers to become more involved with problems at a societal level, rather than focusing exclusively upon the individual. It states that the over-concentration upon the individual has resulted in a social work that is failing.

Extract five

Pinker, R. A. (1982) An Alternative View (Appendix B) in Barclay, P. M. (1982). *Social Workers: Their Role and Tasks (The Barclay Report)*. London: Bedford Square Press, page 237.

This extract represents a political view to the right of centre. In the opinion of the writer, social work should have a limited role in society, and should not be overly ambitious in what it seeks to achieve. Hence social work should be 'targeted' on those who are most in need.

Worldviews - exploring different ones

TINTED SPECTACLES

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The reasons why people come into social work are numerous. Some have clear, well-rehearsed positions and others have difficulty identifying their motives and beliefs. Some subscribe to an -*ism* or two, and others have muddled views with no obvious guiding principles. We all have some kind of personal philosophy - ways of looking at the world and explaining it - but are we aware of what these are? The purpose of this activity is to help students get a better understanding of how the way they view the world influences their work; in other words, how beliefs interact with actions.

Method

This activity is best done by a student and practice teacher jointly. Give a clear explanation of the purpose of the exercise, emphasizing the exploratory aspects and making sure the student knows that there is no pressure to take up any particular position.

The student reads the three statements (A, B, C) in *Tinted spectacles* and the accompanying critiques. Arrange a time when you can exchange comments (probably the next practice tutorial) and suggest that the student makes a few notes in their practice file ready for this discussion.

Encourage the student to enter a dialogue about the statements and your mutual preferences. It is important to avoid preaching or trying to enforce a consensus; the discussion is an opportunity to share the ways you each view the world, and if these are not clear, an attempt to articulate previously unspoken worldviews.

Help the student to relate worldviews to social work practice. How do different beliefs affect the choices social workers make about what they do? (About one hour in total).

Variations

There are as many worldviews as there are people to hold them. What we know as 'isms' (socialism, feminism, etc.) are such cogent worldviews that we often refer to them as theories. A theory is a coherent explanation of why the world is like it is; we might describe it as a particular shade of spectacles to look at the world, rather than a prism of assorted beliefs. The three pairs of "spectacles" in this activity could easily be substituted for different kinds (e.g. feminist, Moslem, humanist). In many respects, it is irrelevant which particular spectacles you try on with the student; the purpose of the activity is to become aware of your own spectacles, by taking them off and trying others on.

Worldviews - exploring different ones **TINTED SPECTACLES Activity**

Three views of social work:

A's statement

Clients approach us with presenting problems, which are expressions of real difficulties in coping at deeper levels (see B1 and C1). The symptom may be an almost conscious plea for help, or it may be the consequence of conflicts in early life which have been unresolved; converting these conflicts into requests for material help may make the problem more acceptable (B2, C2). The caseworker should help the client develop insight into these conflicts, otherwise we just see clients being re-referred with new presenting problems. It is a lengthy process and the use of the relationship is the key to success (B3, C3).

B's statement

Users' own definitions of problems are important, but these individual problems are just the expression of cultural and social conflicts (A1, C4). The economic system creates scapegoats, oppressing certain classes and then attempting to disguise the fact by shedding moral blame on them. A system which deliberately restricts resources (housing, jobs) leads to competition and the creation of an alienated client class (A2, C5). Social workers should use their power to challenge the socio-economic system and mobilize individuals into groups to strike at the structural problems in society by a process of political consciousness raising (A3, C6).

C's statement

There are many reasons why people get involved with social workers. Often there are problems which stem from learning difficulties, but what is most important is the *Here and Now* (A4, B4). Certain behaviours are unacceptable, and the person finds him/herself unable to cope with society's demands and those of the family. Interventions should be short-term and focused on small changes in behaviour and situation (A5, B5). Working within the framework of relevant legislation and the agency's policies, the social worker's task is to help people to adapt their behaviour, so they can make successful choices (A6, B6).

A's critique of B & C

- A1 the individual matters above all; society is made up of individuals
- A2 explain why individuals from same class or family do so differently
- A3 fighting v. society is aggression misdirected from poor relationships
- A4 the here and now is important only as basis for deeper involvement
- A5 short-term work produces short-term change; no radical change
- A6 clients make real choices when attitudes change - not behaviours

B's critique of A & C

- B1 proof of the relevance or existence of these "deeper" levels?
- B2 there is no "conversion" - the presenting problems are real
- B3 they return because welfare only alleviates structural problems
- B4 users must not be taken out of their proper historical context
- B5 perpetuates power inequalities, scapegoating; no radical change
- B6 changes happen when people step outside society's rules

C's critique of A & B

- C1 proof of the relevance or existence of these "deeper" levels?
- C2 our major concern should be the present day dysfunctions
- C3 this goal is too global - what does "insight" mean in practice?
- C4 the here and now is the most important; nothing else amenable to change
- C5 society is harsh towards some people; welfare helps iron this out
- C6 this goal is too global - what's conscientization mean in practice?