

Principles of Social Actions

These are some of the guiding principles of social action.

1: Striving towards Social Justice

Social action workers are committed to social justice. We strive to challenge inequality and oppression in relation to gender, race, sexuality, age, religion, class disability or any other form of social differentiation.

Social action is about fighting for fairness, equality, justice and this need to be stated clearly. We recognize that injustice, discrimination and oppression exist and take a stance against it, in all our work.

2: Believing in People

We believe all people have skills, experience and understanding that they can draw on to tackle the problems they face. Social action workers understand that people are expert in their own lives and we use this as a starting point for our work.

Our job is to help uncover what is already there, to encourage people to use the insights and knowledge they possess to bring about changes in their own lives.

3: Recognizing the Rights of People

All people have rights, including the right to be heard, the right to define the issues facing by them and the right to take action on their own behalf. People also have the right to define themselves and not have negative labels imposed upon them.

Ordinary people's right to be involved in the changes that affect them, to have voice and a stake in the society they live in, is fundamental to social action work. The right to "name their world"; to define themselves and the world around them is something we insist on. Too often people have to contend with

labels imposed upon themselves, or the places they live, for the ease of policy maker and professionals.

4: Bringing out the Reality

Injustice and oppression are complex issues rooted in social policy, the environment and the economy. Social action workers understand people may experience problems as individuals but these difficulties can be translated into common concerns.

We recognize that there are many different problems in individual's lives. They may feel overwhelmed and daunted by these, they may even feel blame for them. Social action gives people the opportunity to break free from this negative view, understand their individual problems in a wider, political context and to do something about organizing to overcome them.

5: Realizing the Importance of Collective Efforts

We understand that people working collectively can be powerful. People who lack the power and influence to challenge injustice and oppression as individuals can gain it through working with other people in a similar position.

Oppression is maintained through isolation and division, though it is experienced by the majority. Our job is to bring people together so that they can share their experiences and pool their resources and skills to fight injustice. Finding common cause, may give individuals the will and power to tackle more complex issues than they might have dared on their own.

6: Being a Facilitator not Leader

Social action workers are not leaders, but facilitators. Our job is to enable people to make decisions for them and take ownership of whatever outcome ensues. Everybody's contribution to this process equally valued and it is vital that our job is not accorded privilege.

Social action workers value all skill and knowledge equally, making not distinction between experience and formal qualification. Our job is to work along side the group, resisting the temptation either to become a group member or a group leader.