

Stages of social case work

Social case work is a problem solving process through which case worker tries to solve the problem of an individual involving him all in process. Social case work process has following stages:

Social study

Social diagnosis

Treatment

Evaluation/Follow up

Conceptually, these are different and separate stages but these do not work in sequence always with one stage following the other. Sometimes, two or more stages proceed at the same time. Diagnosis may also change with the gathering of more data about the situation or with changes taking place in the situation itself. Case work help cannot be delayed till the completion of the social study or the formulation of a social diagnosis. Some kind of help is given even at the first worker-client contact.

In case work intervention the individual client is not considered separate from the family, since the family forms the most important human environment for the client with its network of emotional relationships. Therefore, other members of the family are also involved in the case work process. Also, home visits are made by the case worker to get an understanding of the environment.

1. Social Study

The first step of social case work process is social study. The client in need of help comes to the agency for professional help through case worker. A relationship between these two persons of unequal position and power is developed after acceptance. The case worker accepts the client as a person who is in very stressful situation. He respects the client's personality and helps him to solve his problem. In other words, picks him up from a stressful situation and to regain a personal and social balance that is satisfying and ending. It is called "Intake".

During the study stage, worker assesses client's current and relevant past. He tries to know all related facts. He needs to make an analysis of social, physiological and biological conditions of the client's current stressful situation.

2. Diagnosis

Diagnosis is the conclusion of the problem. What are the capacities on the part of client? Solution of the problem is decided according to the client, problem, place and situation that what should be done by the client and how. All these aspects are very essential and involved in diagnosis.

Diagnosis is started with study phase when a person with any problem comes to an agency for the help. These aspects are necessary regarding diagnosis:

- Nature of the problem and aims or needs of clients he wants to gain
- Personality of the client and his social and physiological history
- Type of agency and its objectives

3. Treatment

A plan of the action after proper diagnosis is adopted for the better solution of client's problem which is called treatment. In social case work process, purpose of treatment is to improve and enhance the social functioning of client and to adjust him in his environment. Other aims of treatment are:

- To change the attitude of client in positive way
- To make the life experience of client more comfortable through enhancement of his abilities
- To prevent further break down to make client confident
- Mobilization of recourses

Often two types of methods are used during treatment process in social case work

Indirect Method:

This is used in such a way that client is provided chances to change and develop condition. It can be done in ways given below:

Mobilization of recourses

Administration of Social Services: Essential resources are also provided i.e. financial aid, shelter, medical aid etc.

Environmental Adjustment: In this method we can see that case worker tries to adjust his client in environment in such a way so that he can feel comfort. We can see the example of an addict who is kept away from his bad company during treatment and even after it.

Direct Method:

In treatment process, direct method is used when there is felt need of psychological support for the solution of the client's problem. In this method interview services for the client are taken into action. It is proved helpful to change the client mind. **Counseling** is used in direct method of treatment to some extent. It is an educational process. It is an art in which interview skill is required. Case worker tries to change the thinking of client through counseling.

4. Evaluation/Follow up

After the case work treatment completion, the case worker evaluates his work with the client. For that, the case worker records his work with each client so that he can evaluate his work easily. During evaluation, if the case worker finds that his work is not satisfying he can make further corrections or modifies the treatment plan. The case worker must evaluate each and every step of his case process. Through this evaluation he can improve his abilities and correct his mistakes in future.