

Challenges for Social Work Professionals towards Child-Centered Development in India

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Abstract

Social work Professional workers frequently work at multiple locations for child-centered development in India; they have an office but also regularly work in the field, visiting clients' homes, schools or health care clinics. Depending on the type of social work they specialize in, they may also meet with clients at their office. A professional social worker employed by a school, health clinic or rehab center conducts their work from their office and within the employer's facility. They monitor their facility's environment, schedule meetings with individuals who are going through a challenging time and check-in regularly with rehab patients to ensure continual progress. Government and community social workers commonly work in the field, visiting at-risk areas, clients' homes or schools. These social workers focus on the issues the client faces within their community or environment, so they must be able to see the environment and make an informed recommendation to improve the client's quality of life. The nature of social work requires professionals to help people who are experiencing extraordinary difficulties. The present paper explores the professional social workers how be able to handle a variety of challenges involving children, families, the elderly, addiction and abuse in a calm, professional and compassionate manner.

Keywords: Social Work Professional, Child-Centered Development, Professional Social Workers' Challenges.

Introduction

Social workers frequently work at multiple locations. They have an office but also regularly work in the field, visiting clients' homes, schools or health care clinics. Depending on the type of social work they specialize in, they may also meet with clients at their office. A social worker employed by a school, health clinic or rehab center conducts their work from their office and within the employer's facility. They monitor their facility's environment, schedule meetings with individuals who are going through a challenging time and check-in regularly with rehab patients to ensure continual progress. Government and community social workers commonly work in the field, visiting at-risk areas, clients' homes or schools. These social workers

focus on the issues the client faces within their community or environment, so they must be able to see the environment and make an informed recommendation to improve the client's quality of life. The nature of social work requires professionals to help people who are experiencing extraordinary difficulties. The social worker must be able to handle a variety of challenges involving children, families, the elderly, addiction and abuse in a calm, professional and compassionate manner. They are responsible for communicating care plans to their clients, health care providers and other colleagues.

Each of these professionals lives out an answer to the question “what do social workers do?” While they spend their days in different settings and carry out unique tasks, each of these social workers has chosen a career path that seeks to improve the lives of people and their communities. That desire to meet crucial needs with meaningful guidance and support is at the heart of the social work profession. Building on the foundation of that commonly held value; social workers branch out into a wide range of organizations and institutions where they meet a range of needs. Social workers serve individuals, groups, and communities by helping people address the problems they face in their everyday lives. Clinical social workers, who must earn a master of social work degree and pursue state licensure, can diagnose and treat mental illness, behavior issues, and emotional problems. These are some of the fundamental duties of the social worker: Identify individuals and groups in need of support, assess the needs, circumstances, and support systems of clients, work with clients to determine achievable, actionable goals and plans to meet them, intervene in crisis situations involving abuse, mental health emergencies, or trauma, maintain client records, case files, and paperwork, connect clients to community resources like healthcare and food assistance, develop and strengthen programs and services that benefit clients, provide psychotherapy services if a licensed clinical social worker. Social workers perform all of these duties and more in many different contexts. Consider some of the settings where social workers provide services to people in need. To put it simply, social workers work where the people are many find employment in schools, others in hospitals, and still others in nursing homes or hospice centers. Social workers are typically categorized as either: child, family, and school social workers, healthcare social workers, mental health and substance social workers, and here are some insights into the specific job roles for each of these categories.

I. Categories of Social Worker Professionals

1. Child, family, and school social workers

These social workers may have jobs within individual schools or at the school district level. They also work for family services agencies, community nonprofit organizations, and government agencies. Residential facilities, such as those designed for formerly incarcerated parents reuniting with their children, also hire child, family, and school social workers. Job titles for a child, family, and school social workers may include: adoption social worker, school social worker, child welfare counselor, family caseworker, family intervention specialist, foster care social worker, public housing services advisor, youth services specialist. In each of these settings and roles, child, family, and school social workers seek to determine the needs of the client population they serve and help facilitate the meeting of those needs through guidance, resources, and support.

2. Healthcare social workers

Healthcare social workers may work in hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, or nursing homes. Others find employment in hospice centers, doctors' offices, outpatient clinics, and home health agencies. Healthcare social workers often spend their time connecting people to the medical care, supplies, and support they need. They may also educate patients on how to make healthcare decisions, how to access their medical information, and how to access care when finances are strained. Some of the job titles given to healthcare social workers include: case manager, disability coordinator, geriatric care manager, home health care social worker, hospice social worker, long term care social worker, medical case manager, pediatric social worker, and public health social worker. Whether they work on the oncology unit of a hospital or spend their days driving from home to home visiting elderly patients, healthcare social workers improve the lives of clients through compassionate and practical support that meets their physical and often their mental and emotional needs.

3. Mental Health Social Workers

Mental health social workers are the largest group of mental health service providers in the United States. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), there are over 200,000 clinically trained social workers, who outnumber psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychiatric nurses

combined. From the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to the American Red Cross, many mental health social workers work for the major government or nonprofit entities. Others work in hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, addiction recovery centers, and community health organizations. Still, others establish private practices where they provide therapeutic services to individuals seeking mental health support. Job titles for mental health social workers may include: addictions counselor, behavioral therapist, clinical director, family therapist intervention coordinator, mental health specialist, psychotherapist, and substance abuse counselor. Whether they are recovering from acute trauma, processing life changes, or struggling with mental illness, people rely upon mental health social workers to help them cope with the challenges they are facing. And the need for social workers who can do just that is only growing.

- More people are seeking treatment for mental illness and substance abuse than they have in the past. Nine out of ten therapists reported that calls seeking support have increased during the pandemic, and most of those therapists have struggled to meet the demand
- Judges are sending more drug offenders to rehabilitation facilities rather than jail than they used to do
- Individuals and communities need help processing the mental and emotional toll of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on individuals, families, and society
- Across all sectors where social workers assist people, and especially in the mental health field, the job outlook for social workers is positive. More social workers also represent more trained professionals spending their careers improving the lives of others, which can be a transformative force in the lives of individuals and whole communities.

II. Importance of the Professional Social Workers

While it would be impossible to note the millions of ways that social workers have benefited individuals, families, and communities, looking at a few specific examples can help us understand the types of change and growth that social workers can create. Here are just some of the ways that notable social workers have made a positive difference in the United States: Jane Addams, the “mother” of social work, co-founded one of the most famous settlement houses in American history in 1889, advocated for women to have a voice in community decisions, and co-founded the ACLU in 1920. Margaret Daniel pioneered groundbreaking mental health social work services within Veterans Affairs in the mid-twentieth century. Bernice Harper developed

long-term program policies regarding continuity-of-care and psychosocial factors for those facing critical illnesses like leukemia. From major changes in government policy to the quiet, critical work of supporting an individual's mental health, the impact of social work on society cannot be understated.

IV. Challenges of the Social Workers

Social work is a career like no other. Where a counselor will coach an individual through their internal struggles, a social worker will look beyond this and consider their relationships, family structure, community environment and the policies that impact them. With this information they will create a plan to ensure that the wellbeing of the individual is being safeguarded. This ability to make such a difference in someone's life is why Forbes ranks social work as the 7th most meaningful job, and there is no doubt that it is a vital role in the functioning of our communities and wider society. Social workers look to improve the challenges that our society faces, but it's important to consider the challenges that they face personally in this profession.

1. Working with Vulnerable People

Working with vulnerable people field of work see you interacting with both children and adults on the individual level, who may be facing physical disabilities or mental health issues. Another facet of the job will involve working with the families, teachers, and communities of these vulnerable people. Research conducted by Unison explores these challenges with first-hand accounts, with one social worker describing a time where they had advised a panel that a child should no longer have contact with their mum, and they had to deliver this verdict directly in front of her. Being exposed to these highly emotional situations can lead to compassion fatigue. It can be difficult to remain unaffected by distressing cases, especially when you are dealing with them on a daily basis. Social workers may suffer from depersonalization, emotional exhaustion and other more easily identifiable symptoms such as headaches. Practicing emotional resilience can help you to handle a crisis and return to a pre-crisis state. It isn't a personality trait, meaning that there are approaches that you can take to help develop your resilience. You may find that setting aside time to practice mindfulness helps you to manage the pressure, or focusing more on your work-life balance may allow you to switch off after work and be more present in your home life. Ultimately you need to figure which will work for you, and this may require some time and patience. Outline the positive impact that you're having on the

community and compare these to the stressors that you are facing. This may remind you of the reason that you became a social worker.

2. Unpredictable schedule

Many social work jobs operate outside of the traditional 9-5 Monday-Friday business hours. Those that do have a typical contract may find their work extending beyond these hours. This can cause problems with balancing work and personal life. Unfortunately, the 9-5 working day is no longer a suitable model for a lot of organisations as the needs of our society have changed. There are benefits of a flexible work routine – you may find time for mindfulness in the form of an exercise class or reading a book. Alternatively, it may help you to focus on the value of working in such an unpredictable profession. These are examples of working at the micro and mezzo level of social care. There are also career opportunities at the macro level where social workers are involved in the legalities and policies that affect our system of care. So, remember that while social work not always offers conventional hours, nor does it have a conventional career route. Each individual can choose their direction, and with so many paths to take you can tailor yours to what suits you.

3. Time spent doing admin is time spent away from the patients

A recent study found that social workers are now spending up to 80% of their time on computers and filing paperwork, leaving a small proportion of day that they're directly providing support. It is not the only profession that is experiencing this shift. UK construction workers spend an average of 90 hours a year per employee on paperwork. In the care sector, it is of utmost importance to address the issue because it limits the time that individuals are receiving support. Consider streamlining your caseloads with the help of software. There are various phone and desktop applications that can do everything from store patient files to tracking their progress. This makes the process of gathering information more efficient and therefore reduces the time spent performing administration duties. Paperwork is a way of life that we must accept, so it is a matter of optimizing the process.

4. Caseloads are down but workloads aren't

Our aging population will see an annual 3% increase in demand for adult social services. Also with the number of people suffering from mental health illnesses on the rise we are beginning to see a surge in

demand for social workers with expertise in this field. However, Heidi McIntosh - a senior policy advisor - reported that there has been a national decline in caseloads. It's vital though, not to associate this with a reduced workload. The caseload vs workload conversation needs to be initiated to ensure that social workers are not overwhelmed and left disheartened at not being able to offer their desired level of care to each of their cases - and most importantly, so that their wellbeing does not suffer. A session with your supervisor is the ideal time to raise an issue of this sort, and if your employer doesn't offer this to you then take the initiative to request it. You could propose caseload weighing as a tool to assess whether your workload is unmanageable. This can help you and your manager to get on the same page and understand whether current expectations are unrealistic.

Conclusion

Society is transforming: People have more choices about the way that they live. Families are no longer conventional; we've seen a change in dynamics and support systems. As mentioned before, our population is aging and more people need support for mental health illnesses. For social workers at the micro and mezzo level, this presents the challenge of adapting your care approach. Meanwhile, social workers at the macro level need to support this change by revising legislation and policies. Enforce the Protected Time Learning approach to reflect on your cases and learn from them. This is an opportunity to share caseloads with your co-workers, and benefit from the power of a shared brain. It's a chance to not only share knowledge but to learn from different perspectives. This process can help facilitate your professional development and for that reason, it should be seen as necessary not a luxury.

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