

SUBJECT: SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH INDIVIDUALS

SUB CODE: GSW12

CLASS: I MSW

UNIT-1

Principles of Casework Client Relationship

Principles of casework are principles of action, based upon a fundamental which influences, guides and directs. The principles are also referred to as qualities or elements as they are present in every good casework relationship and are the constitutive parts of the relationship (Biestek). There are seven principles of the casework relationship:

- A) Principle of Individualization
- B) Principle of Purposeful Expression of Feelings
- C) Principle of Controlled Emotional Involvement
- D) Principle of Acceptance
- E) Principle of Non Judgmental attitude
- F) Principle of Client's right to Self Determination
- G) Principle of Confidentiality

Let us take these principles one by one and get a clear understanding on their application in the Indian context:

A) PRINCIPLE OF INDIVIDUALIZATION:

Individualization is the recognition and understanding of each client's unique qualities and the differential use of principles and methods in assisting each towards a better adjustment. Individualization is based upon the right of human beings to be 'individuals' and to be treated not just as human beings but as this human being with his/her personal differences (Bietek1957). Principle of individualization emanates from the basic recognition of each person as a unique entity. Individualization is one of the essential notes in the concept of a person who according to Boethius is 'an individual substance of rational nature'. Each person is individualized by his/her heredity, environment, innate intellectual capacity, strengths and limitations. Each person experiences unique life situations from birth, forms distinct inter personal relationships.

The thoughts, feelings, behaviours and capacities of each individual are distinct and differ from each other. Thus their problems and the help they need are also distinct from each other. Casework help, therefore, must be differentiated to meet the particular needs of the individual clients and to help the clients use their abilities and resources for self help in order to work towards problem resolution. Each person is conscious of being unique (Biestek 1957). This awareness is particularly poignant when the client approaches the agency in a state of maladjustment in social functioning. The client needs the worker's undivided and individualized attention to discuss his/her problem.

By gaining worker's respect for his/her as an individual with rights and needs, the client feels understood. The success of helping relationship depends upon the individualization of each case by the worker, treating each person as a unique individual having special problems rather than being treated as a 'case/category/patient'. It is observed many times in agencies

that clients who approach the agency for help are referred to as *patients* by the staff. This makes an individual clients feel like ‘medical patient’. Clients must be referred to with their names in a respectful manner.

Pre Requisites for application of Principle of Individualization

□ ***An open and unbiased attitude:*** It is essential for the caseworker to be aware of personal biases and prejudices and not to let them have an influence on the casework relationship. Accurate assessment of the client’s problem, his/her life situations requires the worker to be objective and free from pre conceived notions and prejudices, if any. The prejudices can pertain to diverse categories or groups like low caste, class or gender distinctions, destitute, drug abusers, alcoholics, criminals, sex workers, unwed mothers, people indulging in pre or extra marital relationships etc. A worker while handling cases must be honest and aware of personal feelings, needs and counter transference tendencies.

□ ***Knowledge of human behaviour:*** Caseworkers often have to deal with complex human behaviours, people with diverse personalities. It is imperative for the caseworker to have inter-disciplinary knowledge and understanding derived from psychology, sociology, psychiatry etc.

□ ***Listening and Observing:*** Attentive listening to the narration of client’s problem brings an understanding of the problem for the caseworker. As the client talks about his/her relationships with family and community, caseworker is able to gain a holistic understanding about the client. Competent and professional listening requires not only paying attention to the words being said by the client but observing and analyzing the body gestures, physical signs of hesitation, emotions and facial expressions. Ability to interpret non verbal communication can yield a lot of information to the caseworker which can help in guiding future direction to the caseworker.

□ ***Moving with the client’s pace:*** As the caseworker sees each client, he/she must begin where the client is and proceed at the client’s pace. In the application of the principle of individualization, correct pacing is the secret to the timing at every stage of the casework process- study, diagnosis and treatment. For example, caseworker working with a HIV positive person might be interested in quickly gathering information about how the client contracted the virus or to fill up all the personal details in the case sheet. Hastening the client to divulge details, especially intimate information before he/she is ready would stall the helping process and hamper the casework relationship. Caseworker has to move at the client’s pace and allow time to the client to develop trust in the caseworker.

□ ***Ability to enter into feelings of people:*** The feelings of the client are his/her most individualized characteristics. Recognizing uniqueness in each person implies the realization that each person’s coping strategies are different and every person responds to his/her life situations in a distinct manner. For example failure in board examinations may lead one adolescent to commit suicide while another may strive to work harder next time to clear the examination. Another example may be considered of a women engaged in sex work. While one sex worker

may enjoy her work due to the lure of money that she is paid, another sex worker might have feelings of guilt and shame. Thus, similar life situations may bring about different responses from different individuals. Each person is distinct and possesses own individualized reactions to situations. Individualization requires sensitivity and a response to these feelings. The principle quality of the response is warmth, and to enter into the 'feeling' experience of the client and understand client's perspective.

□ ***Ability to keep perspective:*** The emotional involvement of the caseworker should be controlled and be directed to the larger situation. This enables the worker to keep a holistic view of the case and progress further in the helping relationship. For example, while narrating an incident of sexual abuse, the client is likely to talk of the incident in a detailed manner, sharing intricate feelings about the traumatic experience. In such a case, the worker has to empathize with the client at her *here and now* feelings and also keep the larger picture in mind. The worker would be required to study and assess the impact of the incidents of abuse on the client's relationship on her mind, her relationships with the significant others, stress management skills etc. Having a holistic perspective helps the caseworker to keep the focus on the client in his/her entirety and analyze the interplay of psychosocial, conscious and unconscious factors affecting the client.

Demonstration of Principle of Individualization

a) *Thoughtfulness in details:* Thoughtfulness in working out small details aids in demonstrating individualized attention to the client. For example, a casework meeting with a street and working child may require the child to leave his work for the appointment which would cost him a day's labour. Similarly scheduling an appointment with a professional who is unable to come at a particular timeslot would be insensitive. As far as possible, appointments should be best suited as per the client's convenience.

b) *Privacy in interviews:* In many agencies, casework interviews are conducted in an open office space. This hinders the privacy of the client as he/she is not comfortable in talking openly about the problem. This is a great hindrance to the casework confidentiality. The noise may also create barrier in communication as the caseworker is unable to give undivided and individualized attention to the client.

c) *Care in keeping appointments:* As mentioned earlier, appointments have to suit both the client and the caseworker. Caseworker must keep a diary and promptly keep the appointments. If at all, the meetings have to be rescheduled due to an urgent work, client must be informed in advance. A promptly kept appointment gives a feeling of reassurance and importance to the client.

d) *Preparation for interview:* One of the best immediate preparations for individualizing the client is to review the written case records. This helps in refreshing the details of the earlier discussions and enables the caseworker to plan ahead for the next meeting.

e) *Engaging the client:* Demonstrating the principle of individualization involves engagement of the client according to his/her capacity in the casework process i.e. in the study, assessment and treatment. For example, casework with a woman who is in a disturbed marital relationship would

imply encouraging her to objectively assess her situation, weighing of the probable alternatives beforehand in case she wants to be out of the marriage. She may be helped to carry out a cost benefit analysis of each of her alternatives before taking a decision. Enabling the client in selecting the treatment goals and encouraging the person to make a choice stimulates client's self confidence and demonstrates the principle of individualization.

f) Flexibility: Caseworker needs to be open minded and modify the treatment goals in accordance with the client's needs, knowledge about client's life situations and problems. The ability to adjust goals and methods calls for mature judgment, objectivity and skill on the part of caseworker. Flexibility is a special way of individualizing the client.

B) PRINCIPLE OF PURPOSEFUL EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS:

Emotions are an integral part of an individual's nature and their healthy development is necessary for the development of the total personality of a person. In the modern helping professions, the importance of a well ordered emotional life has been eminently recognized. Both psychology and psychiatry have studied the normal, healthy role of emotions in the personality structure. These disciplines have given social work, a body of knowledge about human growth and development which has made the helping process of social work eminently more effective. The basic psychological needs of human beings have been identified as the need for affection, security, status, expression, achievement and independence. The degree of these needs varies from person to person. The need for expression and for sharing of experience has been singled out by social work as a pertinent dynamic in casework relationship. Purposeful expression of feelings according to Biestek is the "recognition of the client's need to express the negative feelings. The caseworker listens purposefully neither discouraging nor condemning the expression of these feelings, sometimes even actively stimulating and encouraging them when they are therapeutically useful as a part of the casework service". The client's expression of feelings should have a valid purpose in the casework process.

Purposes of the *Purposeful Expression of feelings* are as follows:

- ☐ *Relieving pressure:* Giving vent to one's feelings, talking about the problem aids in catharsis which in turn enables an individual to see his/her own problem more clearly and objectively. This enables the client for positive and constructive action.
- ☐ *Assessment of problem:* The expression of feelings helps the caseworker to understand the problem of the client more accurately and evaluate strengths and limitations of the client.
- ☐ *Psychological support:* Listening to a person while he/she talks about the problem in life provides immense psychological support to the client. The client feels understood and relieved from the burden of the problem.
- ☐ *Working towards negative feelings:* At times, negative feelings of the clients serve as the source of problem. Sharing these feelings helps to bring them into the forefront of attention so that they may be resolved.

□ *Strengthening casework relationship*: Talking about the problems, sharing feelings strengthens the casework relationship. Encouraging the client to express his/her feelings helps in deepening the bond between the worker and client. This also brings comfort, warmth and trust in the caseworker client relationship. The client's expression of feelings in the casework process also has certain limitations.

The limitations of the Purposeful expression of feelings are as follows:

□ *Agency constraints*: Functions of an agency may limit the expression of feelings to those which can be treated within the agency. For example a caseworker working in an agency that deals with juvenile delinquents may not be able to work with HIV positive clients. At times the agency may not have the services of professional experts or the resources required to deal with the cases e.g. psychiatrist, speech therapist, facility for psychological testing etc. In such cases referrals may be done to specified agencies.

□ *Workload*: Workload with the caseworker determines the amount of time a caseworker can devote to each case. For example, if a caseworker is handling fifty cases apart from regular agency work, he/she may not have enough time to encourage expression of deeper feelings which require more time in each interview.

□ *Premature expression of deep feelings*: Caseworker needs to be cautious in the early interviews about client's premature expression of deeper feelings. For example, talking about intimate details of having undergone through a rape by a victim in the very first meeting may not be desirable. This may inculcate feelings of guilt and hamper the casework relationship. Caseworker has to structure the entire casework process and slowly work towards building a relationship based on trust rather than allowing ventilation of deeper feeling at a premature stage.

□ *Client Engagement*: Clients may have the tendency to put the total burden of conflict resolution on the caseworker. This is more common in the Indian situation where people have the tendency to talk about their problem and look up to the helper for 'readymade quick fix recipes' for problem resolution. Caseworker must ensure engagement of the client in the helping process right from the beginning to avoid undue dependence on the worker.

Demonstration of Principle of Purposeful Expression of Feelings

An essential function of the caseworker is to create a permissive environment that would encourage the client to freely express his/her feelings. This includes gaining trust, confidence of the client. Most clients talk at a superficial level and do not disclose their inner feelings till they are sure of the worker's accepting and permissive attitude towards client as an individual. Secondly, the caseworker's real desire to help and feeling *with* the client has to be communicated to the client at the 'feeling' level. Creation of a permissive environment is essential for purposeful expression of feelings.

This may be done in the following ways:

□ *Relaxed attitude*: Caseworker should be in a relaxed frame of mind, free from any preoccupations so that full attention may be devoted to the client. Ensuring privacy during interviews, having comfortable furniture in the room are some of the important steps to make the client feel comfortable and open up.

□ *Preparation*: Prior to the interview, the caseworker must go through the earlier case records. This would refresh the memory and prepare the worker in planning and structuring for the upcoming interview.

□ *Listening*: Client's purposeful expression of feelings depends upon the quality of attention that is given by the caseworker. This enables the client to feel caseworker's genuine interest, sincerity, understanding and makes him/her to open up and express emotions. By asking appropriate questions, making empathic comments, nodding and showing interest through facial expressions, caseworker can demonstrate active listening to the client.

□ *Encouragement*: The client has to be encouraged to talk and express feelings. Thus, by asking non threatening questions, repeating important phrases or words being said by client, making comments, expressing empathy; worker can motivate the client to talk freely. Statements like 'I realize how difficult this must be for you. What happened thereafter?' 'How did you *feel* when this happened?' are open ended statements/questions that require elaborate expression of feelings by the client.

□ *Pace of progress*: A sensitive awareness of the client's pace of movement in each interview towards his/her casework goals is very necessary. Client's motivation to work towards resolving the problem would reflect upon the need and desire to express feelings at any given time.

□ *Being Realistic*: Caseworker should refrain from giving any unrealistic reassurances, interpreting too early or too much in the expression of feelings by the client. Caseworker must not over estimate or under estimate client's capacity to tolerate anxiety. Caseworker must allow the client to talk, express feelings and feel relieved. The principle of Purposeful expression of feelings aids

in study and diagnosis in casework. Purposeful expression of feelings helps the caseworker to gain invaluable material for study and gain a realistic understanding of the client and his/her progress in totality. This helps in seeing the problem clearly and working towards its resolution. By their expression the feelings are brought out in the open for discussion and increase the client's participation and involvement to help himself/herself.

C) PRINCIPLE OF CONTROLLED EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT:

Communication is a two way process between the communicator and the receiver with the flow of information. The content of communication comprises of the following:

- Ideas only
- Feelings only
- Ideas and feelings

When a woman seeks information at the railway reservation counter, she is only seeking information and expecting a factual response. On the other hand, when a teenage girl who had been raped discovers her pregnancy shares with her friend, *I do not know how I will face the world*, she is communicating her feelings. In such case only her feeling response would be

appropriate. In casework interviews, the content of communication is most often a combination of *thought* and *feeling* (Biestek: 1957). The nature of content depends upon – problem of the client, function of the agency, needs and feelings of the client in particular interviews, changing moods of the client within an interview and the purposes of the caseworker in the ongoing processes of study, diagnosis and treatment. The social caseworker needs the skill to communicate at both the *thought* and *feeling* levels. Caseworker has to gain factual information and at the same time study client's ideas, thoughts and feelings. The element of controlled emotional involvement in a casework relationship according to Biestek, is the caseworker's sensitivity to client's feelings and understanding of their meaning and a purposeful, appropriate response to the client's feelings. There are three components in demonstration of controlled emotional involvement:

- a) Sensitivity
- b) Understanding
- c) Response

a) **Sensitivity:** Sensitivity means seeing and listening to the feelings of the client. Many times, clients are unable to express their feelings verbally or are ready to divulge personal details. With the knowledge of human behaviour, observation and analytical skills, the caseworker has to observe the minutest of the details and draw an understanding by putting them in proper perspective. Body language or the non verbal communication can be effectively used as clues and indices to identify and interpret client's feelings. For example, use of hands, arms and legs, pace, tone of speech, posture, eye contact, silence, repetitive body actions are important indicators of client's non verbalized feelings.

b) **Understanding:** As a professional helping person, the caseworker needs to understand the meaning of the client's feelings in relation to the client's problem. The worker's own life experiences and professional practice help in introspection and analysis of the professional situations. This includes knowledge of common human needs, patterns of human reactions and defenses in times of stress. This general knowledge is then used as a framework within which this particular client, with his/her individual and unique qualities, can be better understood and helped.

c) **Response:** Sensitivity and understanding are insufficient in themselves; they are means to the response. The caseworker's response to the client on the *feeling* level is the most important psychological element in the casework relationship and is perhaps the most difficult to the casework skills. The response is not necessarily verbal. Essentially it is a response of attitude and feeling, guided by knowledge and purpose. It is primarily an internal response where the caseworker consciously and purposefully identifies with the feelings of the client. It is a sharing of a warmly human professional person with fine sensitivities of another human being who needs help (Biestek:1957) The response of the worker should reflect the skill to probe in order to gather factual as well as feeling information from the client, while verbalizing understanding. It should convey warmth and empathy to the client.

D) PRINCIPLE OF ACCEPTANCE: Acceptance is one of the commonly used term in social work profession. It is an important value in social work is that guides social workers to accept people as they are, with their strengths and limitations, potentialities and weaknesses, positive

and negative feelings. In social work, acceptance is related with 'quality of life, professional attitude, the central dynamic and a principle'. According to Biestek (1957), action of acceptance is indicated as therapeutic understanding, respecting, loving, perceiving, acknowledging, helping and receiving. The three steps in the action of acceptance are as follows:

- ☐ Perceiving
- ☐ Therapeutic understanding
- ☐ Acknowledging

The caseworker must first objectively see what he/she is accepting. The worker must see the object of acceptance in relation to the causes which brought about the object in relation to what it means to the person, and in relation to the purpose of the casework process in each individual case. The caseworker must acknowledge this as a pertinent reality. The qualities of acceptance are warmth, courtesy, listening, respect, concern, consistent maturity, firmness and willingness to consciously enter and share in the life experiences of another (Biestek:1957). The purpose of acceptance in casework is different from other interpersonal relationships e.g. with spouse, siblings, friends etc. Acceptance in casework process is therapeutic in nature as it aims at helping the client to deal with problems and needs.

Distinction between Acceptance and Approval An important standpoint in casework is the distinction between acceptance and approval. Acceptance does not mean concurrence with or approval of client's behaviour. To illustrate, let us take an example of a man who has committed a murder and now seeking help from a caseworker. In this case, following the principle of acceptance would not imply that the worker's approval of the crime committed by the client. The worker would objectively study the client and assess the probable reasons that led the man to commit such a crime. Caseworker would accept the client as an individual possessing all his dignity and worth as an individual. However, the worker would disapprove of the murder committed by the client.

The worker would not verbally praise or condemn the act and show empathic interest in getting to know the client and his life situations better. By acceptance one does not mean that the worker becomes partial in the face of the deviant behaviour that has added on to misery and deviance in society. It may be remembered that the client would not really be helped if his/her anti social behaviour (murder in this case) is apparently appreciated by the worker. The objective of acceptance is not the *good* but the *real*. Its objective as mentioned earlier is therapeutic i.e. to aid the worker to understand the client better and making the helping process more effective. The purpose is to free the client from using defense mechanisms and enabling him/her see the reality and realistically deal with the problem. Thus, principle of acceptance as defined by Biestek(1957) is as follows:

"Principle of acceptance is a principle where the caseworker perceives and deals with the client as he/she really is, including strengths and weaknesses, congenial and uncongenial qualities, positive and negative feelings, constructive and deconstructive attitudes and behaviour, maintaining all the while a sense of the client's innate dignity and personal worth".

Understanding the client better

Let us try to understand the client's perspective. The client comes to the agency with some problem or maladjustment which he/she has been unable to cope with. Thus on one side, there is a sense of failure to resolve one's problem and having to seek outside help. At the same time, there is also a sense of own pride and dignity which make the client feel ambivalent. The strength of the desire to change and readiness to effect change is varying in each individual. This ambivalence extends to the caseworker as the client realizes that some weaknesses have to be shared since he/she is seeking outside support. This makes the client fear disapproval from the worker and feel insecure. To deal with this insecurity, the client makes use of defense mechanisms that help the client to hide the anxieties and inner feelings from one's self and from the worker. In such a situation, by making the client feel accepted, showing interest and genuine concern, the worker helps the client in reducing the anxiety and lowering the defense mechanisms. The principle of acceptance aids the casework process as the client begins to express feelings and open up to the caseworker. However, the client constantly checks the reactions of the worker to his/her disclosure of feelings especially negative feelings.

Limitations of Principle of Acceptance

- ☐ Inadequate knowledge of human behaviour;
- ☐ Counter transference;
- ☐ Caseworker being judgemental about the client's situation;
- ☐ Caseworker's personal biases and prejudices;
- ☐ Unrealistic assurances by the worker;
- ☐ Confusion between acceptance and approval;
- ☐ Lack of respect for the client.

E) PRINCIPLE OF NON JUDGEMENTAL ATTITUDE:

One of the most talked about principles of casework that is also a difficult one to practice is the Principle of non judgmental attitude. According to Biestek (1957), Principle of non judgmental attitude is defined as "Quality for casework relationship, it is based on a conviction that the casework function excludes assigning guilt or innocence or degree of client responsibility for causations of the problem or needs, but does include making evaluating judgments about the attitudes, standards or actions of the client: the attitude which involves both thought and feeling elements, is transmitted to the client". Casework is a helping process where judgment would imply blaming the client and making him/her responsible for causing problems in his/her life. Let us take an example of a woman who has approached a child guidance clinic to seek help for her daughter who is showing symptoms of depression. Being judgmental in this case would imply blaming the mother for her daughter's condition. Similarly, passing a judgment on a HIV positive person would mean blaming the client for his/her physical condition and for contracting HIV. As mentioned earlier, holistic understanding of the client and his/her life situations is necessary in the casework relationship. However, this does not give the caseworker an authority to make judgments about the clients.

Understanding Client's perspective

Seeking outside support for conflict resolution is not an easy task. The necessity to seek help from an agency can in itself produce a host of painful feelings. One of these feelings is the fear of being judged. In the initial interviews, the client looks at the caseworker as one of the members of the larger society which is often judgmental with fixed standards of Do's and

Don'ts. The client fears of being labeled by the caseworker, keeping in mind the preset standards of right and wrong. As a result of these feelings, the client adapts by using defense mechanisms and is hesitant to express inner thoughts and feelings. In such a scenario, demonstration of a non judgmental attitude helps the client 'feel' assured of the caseworker's disinterest in making any kind of judgment, in praising or condemning the client. As the relationship gradually strengthens, the client grows in faith in the worker and begins to discuss needs and problems, develops objective analysis necessary for constructive change.

Evaluation of Attitudes, Standards and Actions of client

There is a clear cut difference between being non judgmental towards the client and judging client's *behaviour* which may be moral/ immoral. While the caseworker refrains from judging the guilt or innocence of the client; he/she objectively evaluates the attitudes, standards and actions of the client. In order to understand this, let us take the case of a woman who is in a live-in relationship and seeking help to deal with problems with her lover. While dealing with such a case, the worker has no right to give the client a moral lecture on the grounds of her live in relationship, which is still not readily accepted in large parts of India. However, the worker has to probe into her life situation and make inquiries in order to make evaluations of her behaviour.

The purpose in this case would be to understand the client and this would aid in the treatment process. There are strong and valid reasons for practicing a non judgmental attitude. The worker being a social worker is a member of the larger society and his/her function is to help the client (and not condemn) within the law and basic values of society. If the caseworker is oblivious towards delinquent and immoral behaviour/attitude of the client, the client would not feel understood and may underrate the worker's ability to provide professional help. Moreover, the case worker has every right to have his/her own social, moral and spiritual values. The worker must, however, ensure that his/her personal values, beliefs, opinions and code of ethics are not imposed on the client in any way. The worker has no right to judge the client by personal standards.

F) PRINCIPLE OF SELF DETERMINATION:

One of the firmest convictions of social work profession is that a person has an innate ability for self determination. A conscious willful violation of the client's freedom by a caseworker is considered unprofessional as it transgresses the client's natural right and impairs the casework treatment. The principle of self determination is defined by Biestek (1957) as follows:

"The principle of self determination is the practical recognition of the right and need of clients to freedom in making their own choices and decisions in the casework process. Caseworkers have a corresponding duty to respect that right, recognize that need, stimulate and help to activate that potential for self direction by helping the client to see and use the available and appropriate resources of the community and of his/her own personality. The client's right to self determination is however, limited by the client's capacity for positive and constructive decision making, by the framework of civil and moral law, and by the function of the agency". Client as a human being has the responsibility of living his/her life in such a manner that he/she is able to work towards achieving life's goals. The client also has the right to decide the course of action to achieve. However, the client seeks professional help from social caseworker to know the various

alternatives and objectively evaluate each alternative. Following are the ways by which principle of self determination can be demonstrated:

a) *Communicating the problem*: The caseworker's acceptance of the client and the diagnosis after the study phase has to be communicated to the client. The caseworker has to enable the client work through the emotional disturbance and clearly see the problem

b) *Enabling identification of resources*: Caseworker must help the client identify available resources that may be used for problem resolution. Caseworker and the client work together to carry out cost benefit analysis of the alternatives available to the client. The role of the worker is to delicately balance activity as well as passivity. The passivity consists of doing things for and to the client, thus helping the client to express fully and freely. The caseworker is however active in observing and evaluating the words, actions and emotions of the client, analyzing client's strengths as well as limitations, enriching outer and inner resources of the client and stimulating the client towards his/her activity (Biestek).

c) *Activating client's resources*: Worker has to help the client to get free from stress, fears and provide support to grow through the worker client relationship. The ultimate goal is to capacitate the client to be self reliant.

d) *Facilitative relationship environment*: Caseworker has to create a relationship environment in order to enable the client grow and work out the problems. With active listening, the caseworker facilitates client participation in deeper realization of own problems, identify resources to work out own problems. In application of the principle of Self Determination, the caseworker however must not assume the principle responsibility for problem resolution for the client. The client must be helped to take an active role while caseworker's role is more of a facilitator and supporter. Caseworker should not in any way manipulate or persuade the client in choosing the course of action or in decision making.

Limitations of Principle of Self Determination

□ *Client's capacity for positive and constructive decision making*: Each client's physical and mental capacity to take personal decisions varies. For example, a mentally retarded child would not be able to take decisions related to career/vocational activity to be taken up. Similarly, persons suffering from mental illnesses (schizophrenia, cases of acute depression or those having suicidal or homicidal tendencies) may not be emotionally stable to take objective independent decisions. In such cases, the caseworker would have to assume a lead role in order to protect the client from taking inappropriate decisions.

G) PRINCIPLE OF CONFIDENTIALITY:

Confidentiality in social work can be considered from two standpoints- as an item in the professional code of ethics and as an element of the casework relationship. The principle of confidentiality is very complex and difficult to apply to concrete casework situations.

Biestek(1957) has given its following definition of the principle of confidentiality: "Confidentiality is the preservation of secret information concerning the client which is disclosed in the professional relationship. Confidentiality is based upon a basic right of the client; it is an

ethical obligation of the caseworker and is necessary for effective casework service. The client's right however, is not absolute. Moreover, the client's secret is often shared with other professional persons within the agency; the obligation then binds all equally".

Client when approaches an agency with a problem is aware of the necessity to verbalize and reveal pertinent facts, inner feelings and fears about his/her life to the caseworker. Without expressing these, the client cannot expect help in conflict resolution. This information may be very personal, might be related with immoral or socially undesirable behaviour of the client and may hamper 'social image' of the client, if disclosed to people. Therefore, there is a need to practice the principle of confidentiality by the caseworker.

Ethical obligations of caseworker

Confidential information can be defined as a fact or a condition, or the knowledge there of pertaining to a person's private life which is normally hidden from the eyes of others. Biestek (1957) has given three classes of confidential information:

- a) The Natural Secret
- b) The Promised Secret
- c) The Entrusted Secret

Limitations of Principle of Confidentiality

□ *Conflict within the client:* An apparent conflict may exist between the client's right to preserve own secret and another of his/her rights and duties. The solution of this conflict requires evaluation of the rights without any exaggeration. The presumption should always be that the right to confidentiality remains dormant until clear evidence to the contrary appears.

□ *Conflict with the rights of another individual:* At times, preservation of the client's secret may harm the rights of an innocent person. E.g. client may confess about motives to kidnap someone. In this case, if the caseworker decides to stick to the principle of confidentiality, it would mean putting an innocent person's life in danger and causing unnecessary misery. Caseworker thus has to evaluate objectively and take a decision.

□ *Conflict with the rights of the social worker:* Occasionally by keeping the client's secret, the worker may forfeit own personal rights, which may be more important than the client. The worker cannot be expected to surrender own rights in the performance of professional duty.

□ *Conflict with the rights of the social agency:* Every agency has got its own set of goals, programmes, target groups and services. Incase an extreme situation arises where by keeping the client's secret, a right of the agency would be violated and the agency would be forced to operate contrary to its function; the agency would not be bound to preserve client's secret.

□ *Conflict with the rights of the society as a whole:* Each person has the right to maintain peace, harmony, promoting common good and welfare of people. The general principle is that the obligation of the entrusted secret ceases when the preservation of the secret would constitute a real and serious damage to the common good.

Conclusion

The relationship between the caseworker and the client is of utmost importance. The caseworker and the client are fundamentally equal as human beings. In a casework relationship however, caseworker takes on the role of a professional helper while client is the person who needs help. Caseworker client relationship also differs from other professional relationships such as doctor-patient, psychiatrist-client. Casework relationship goes much beyond merely a friendly relationship between the caseworker and the client. Clients bring into the casework relationship their feelings, attitudes and behaviour which they have experienced with others. By exhibiting an open, 'warm' attitude, caseworker is able to convey to the client his/ her openness and concern to understand the client's problem, client's attitudes and sharing of experiences. Through empathy, caseworker is able to convey to the client his/her understanding of client's problem with accuracy and 'oneness'. By feeling caseworker's

Compounds of case work

Introduction

Social case work is a complex, dynamic, and evolving phenomenon. It is complex by virtue of the varied knowledge which feed it, the ethical commitments which infuse it, the special auspices and conditions of its practice, the objectives and ends which guide it, the skills which empower it. It is complicated by the fact that it deals with materials which are in interaction and change among themselves and also in response to the interaction of case work itself. As it is experienced, practiced, or thought about, the social case work is a living event. As such it cannot be contained within a definition. Yet we can try to define it in a manner as it is used by the practitioners. *Social case work is a process used by certain human welfare agencies to help individuals to cope more effectively with their problems in social functioning.*

Case work is both social and psychological. The term "social" implies which involves more than one person; the term "psychological" is that which takes place within *L.H.M. Gangte, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi* an individual. Since the individual does not live in a vacuum, the content of much of his inner experience is "psycho-social." In other words, there is no real dichotomy between the social and the psychological. There is an aspect of experience, however, which belongs to and is characterized by the individual himself. The nucleus of the case work event is this: a person with a problem comes to a place where a professional representative helps him by a given process. Since this is the heart of almost any situation where a person seeks professional help, the distinctive characteristics must be delineated.

There are four components of case work known as the 4P's:

1. The Person
2. The Problem
3. The Place
4. The Process

Let us examine each, one by one

The Person

The person is a man, woman or child or anyone who finds himself/herself, or is found to be, in need of help in some aspect of his social-emotional living, whether the need be for tangible provisions or counsel. As he/she begins to receive help, he/she is called a “client”. A client is one who seeks professional help, one who employs the help of another or one who is served by a social agency or an institution. David Landy has identified the process a person goes through in seeking help or becoming a client:

1. The help seeker must decide something is wrong.
2. The help seeker must face the probability that family, friends and neighbours will know of his disability.
3. The help seeker must decide to admit to a helper he is in distress, failed or is not capable of handling his own problem.
4. The help seeker must decide to surrender enough sovereignty and autonomy to place him in a dependency role.
5. The help seeker must decide to direct his search for help among persons and resources known to him.
6. The help seeker must decide to take time off a job or from other responsibilities to receive help.
7. The help seeker may realize that in receiving help relationship with others may be threatened.

The person seeking help brings to the helping situation concerns, needs and problems. The person comes with concerns, unmet needs and problems of social functioning. He/She comes from a societal and cultural milieu, a set of life experiences, and a set of transactions with other person's that make the person unique yet sharing the commonalities of humankind. The client of a social agency is like the other persons one has ever known, but he/she is different too. In broad ways he/ she is like all other human beings; in a somewhat more limited way he/she is like all other human beings of his age or time or culture. But, as one moves from understanding him/her simply as a human being to understanding him/her as this particular human being, one finds that, with all his/her's general likeness to others, he/she is as unique as his thumbprint. By nuance and fine line and by the particular way his/her bone and brain and spirit are joined, he/she is born and grows as a personality different in some ways from every other individual of his/her family, genus, or species.

The client role calls for active participation in the helping endeavor, which includes furnishing appropriate information to inform the decision making process, participation in the decision-making process to the limits of the clients ability and capacity, and the carrying put of the mutually agreed upon tasks.

Clients are of several types:

1. Those who ask for appropriate help for themselves.
2. Those who ask for help for another person or system.
3. Those who do not seek help but are in some way blocking or threatening the social functioning of another person (e.g., the neglectful parent in a child protection case).

4. Those who seek or use help as a means to reach their own goals or ends.
5. Those who seek help but for inappropriate goals. Identification of clients type is the first step in the delivery of service, for the worker-client relationship and interaction will vary depending on the type of client and the nature of help sought. Felix Biestik has identified seven needs of clients as they come to the helping situation:
 1. To be dealt with as an individual rather than a type or category.
 2. To express feelings both positive and negative.
 3. To be accepted as a person of worth, a person with innate dignity.
 4. Sympathetic understanding of and response to feelings expressed.
 5. To be neither judged nor condemned for the difficulty in which the clients finds himself.
 6. To make own choices and decisions concerning one's own life.
 7. To help keep confidential information about self as secret as possible.

The client is a person with both needs and a problem(s). The problem may be related to a client. No one can ever know the whole of another person, though may sometimes delude himself/herself to that effect. The reason for this lies not only in the subtle dimensions and interlacing of any personality but also in the shift and reorganization of new and old elements in the personality that take place continuously just because the person is alive in a live environment and is in interaction with it. Nevertheless, the person is a whole in any moment of his/her living. He/she operates as a physical, psychological, social entity, whether on the problem of his/her neurotic anxieties or of his inadequate income. He/she is a product-in-process, so to speak, of his/her constitutional makeup, his/her physical and social environment, his/her past environment, his/her experiences, his/her present perceptions and reactions, and even his/her future aspirations. It is this physical-psychological-social-past present- future configuration that he/she brings to every life-situation he/she encounters. The person's behaviour has this purpose and meaning to gain satisfaction, to avoid and dissolve frustration and to maintain his/her balance- in-movement.

To understand a person, it is important to know his/ her parts of personality that is Id (life forces of the individual), ego (conscious, drivers gliding our personality forces) and superego (unconscious, ethical values and principles) which have an important role in governing his/her behaviour. Whether a person's behaviour is or is not effective in promoting his/her well-being depends in large part upon the functioning of his/her personality structure. The forces of the human personality combine in three major functions: (1) the life energies that seek satisfactory outlets; (2) the check system, automatic or voluntary, that halts, modifies, or re-channel these drives to make their ends acceptable to their owner and his/her environment; and (3) the organizing and governing operations that controls the negotiations and balances within the person himself/herself, as between what he/she wants and what he/she can and ought to do, and between himself and his/her physical environment. Freud, a psychologist defined them as id, ego and superego. The harmonious concerted action of these forces in one makes for personal and

social balance and competence; their discord of faultiness is revealed in behaviour that is personally thwarting or socially unacceptable.

A person at any stage of his/her life is not only “a product” of nature but is also and always “in process” of being in the present and becoming in the future. What happens to the individual today may be as vital to him/her as what happened yesterday. Those physical, social and interpersonal situations he encounters in his/her operations today as worker, parent, spouse, student or client will have an impact upon him/her and will respond that can affect his/her development either morbidly or benignly.

The persons “being and becoming” behaviour is both shaped and judged by the expectations he/she and his/ her culture have invested in the status and the major social role he/she carries- a man may be a father, a son, an employee, a club member and a client of the case worker, all in the space of a few hours. His/her social role consists of the major function he/she carries at a given time with broadly designated behaviour, responsibility and rewards. His/her conflict may be caused by his recognition of what his role calls for and his emotional inability to meet it.

The person who comes as client to a social agency is always under stress. Regardless of the client's reason for coming for help, the client brings much more than concerns, needs or problems to the helping situation. The client brings the total self as a biological, psychosocial, cultural and spiritual being. This includes the resources of self and the personal environment and also environmental constraints. What the client brings includes perceptions of self and the situations and patterns of coping with stress and patterns of interpersonal relationships. The client's present need and/or problem is affected in part by the way developmental needs have been met and by needs arising from the diverse aspects of the client's lifestyle and from the expectations of the client's environment. One of the major tasks of the worker is to understand the client as a unique person in a unique situation. There can never be total knowledge about a client; that is impossible. The worker seeks knowledge about the client that is needed for giving the service to be delivered. The client is the major source of the facts used to develop the understanding of the person in the situation. Before a person seeks help from a social agency, he or she has usually attempted to deal with a problem in a way that has worked with previous problems commonly known as “coping”. Coping results not only in solving problems but in the reduction of tension and anxiety. If the coping is not successful, a person may then turn to his or her natural support system, that is, friends, relatives, associates etc. Thus, individuals often come to the agency after a period of unsuccessful attempts to deal with their problems.

The Problem

Problem, according to the America Heritage dictionary is a “question or situation that presents uncertainty, perplexity or difficulty”. This definition is rather inadequate without elaboration for defining in this chapter.

1) When does a situation become problematic?

2) When does a problematic situation become appropriate for social work concern?

Clarification of the term becomes somewhat easier if one looks at a problem in terms of both need and social functioning. Concern for and need of human systems is the basis of the social work response. When the need is seen as mitigating a block to social functioning, a problem of concern to social work is said to exist. This concern should be understood also to include potential blocks to human functioning so as to include preventive as well as ameliorative concerns. The perplexing situation is then related to removal of the obstacle that blocks need fulfillment. For problem solution, goals are related to need fulfillment.

In order to work out a problem, one must first understand it, comprehend it and be oriented too. In the attempt to understand any problem, there must be some analysis of it, some translation into other familiar terms, some sets of associations which can be brought to it. This is the way case worker function when they are confronted with a problem. They must come to the point where they can see through it. The frame of reference which is used in seeing through the problem may vary, but the necessity to understand, it is universal. Moreover, one must understand not only the nature of the problem, as a social, economic or psychological entity but also the personal context of the problem, in other words the personalities which are involved in it. No service can be administered effectively without such understanding.

Dimensions of how a problem arises:

1. The problem arises from some need or obstacle or accumulation of frustrations or maladjustments and sometimes all of these together which threatens or has already attacked the adequacy of the person's living situation or the effectiveness of his/her efforts to deal with it.
2. The social-functioning problem may rest in interpersonal relationships; for example, the inability of a parent to understand an adolescent child's need and thus, is so strict that the relationship between parent and child is at the point where there is open rebellion and an inability to discuss the situation
3. The problem may rest in an inability to negotiate with systems in the environment for e.g., a patient in a hospital is unable to ask the doctor the questions that are bothering the patient or to make his/her concerns known to the doctor.
4. The problem may rest in inadequate or inappropriate role performance; for example, the parent does not meet the nutritional needs of the child or maintain a suitable home for that child. May be one of deficiency; that is, an individual does not have either the material resources or the personal capacity (temporary or permanent) to carry out the task needed for coping with a situation. An older person with a limited income and limited physical capacity may not be able to maintain a home or fix nutritious meals.
5. One may not have the preparation needed to carry out a social role. For example, the mother who did not have adequate mothering as a child and has received no instruction in childcare may not be able to properly care for her child because she just does not know how to care for small children.

6. May be due to disturbances or disorder resulting in intrapsychic turmoil, constriction or distortion. For e.g. the person may be mentally ill or have some perpetual difficulties which result in using inappropriate or ineffective means for coping with life situations.

7. May be there is discrepancies between expectations of a person and the demands of various segments of that person's environment. For example, an individual expects that food, clothing and shelter will be provided by a social agency without work on his/her part, but the agency can only provide partially for those needs.

8. Problems may arise due to discrepancies between environmental demands and personal needs. For example, a teenage girl whose mother is ill is expected to care for younger siblings, but she needs time for completing her education and for socialization with her peers. According to Perlman, the social functioning focus of social work began to emerge when problems were seen not as pathological but as part of life. Problems are frequent and unexpected in the human situation, and solutions are usually found without professional help.

The concern of social work narrowed to those problems in which persons cannot readily unblock the fulfillment of need with their own resources. Problem in social work usage refers to a social-functioning situation in which need fulfillment of any of the persons or systems involved is blocked or has a significant potential of blockage, and in which the person involved cannot by themselves remove the block to need fulfillment.

The Place

The place is a social service agency or a social service department of another kind of human welfare agency. The place to which the person comes for help with his/ her problem is known as a social agency. The term "agency" has a misleading American sound, but it was used in British case work literature in the late nineteenth century. Present day usage refers to the institution within which the case worker practices; sometimes it is the larger institution that is intended (e.g. the local authority) and at other times it is the smaller social work microcosm (e.g. the psychiatric social work department in a mental hospital). The institutions in which case workers practice (schools, child guidance clinics, children's departments of the hospitals and courts and so on) have all been established to achieve certain broad social purposes and case workers have a part to play in achieving them. Its purpose is to help individuals with the particular social handicaps which hampers good personal or family living and with the problems created by faulty person-to-person, person-to-group or person-to-situation relationships. This agency's purpose and functions come to life in the person and professional performance of the case worker. Social case work agencies differ one from the other in a number of ways, but there are three major factors that determine their classification:

1. Their source of support- public taxation (child welfare, physical and mental health programmes etc) or voluntary contribution.
2. Their source of professional authority – primary agencies carry full authority and responsibility for their social functions and secondary agencies derive their authority and responsibility from the host agency.
3. Their special function and area of concern- primary agencies both public and private, may define certain areas of social need as the particular fielding in which they give services.

Secondary, case work help is related to the work of some other profession, such as medicine, education or law and to its specific knowledge and purpose.

The Process

The process, is a progressive transaction between the professional helper (the case worker) and the client. It consists of a series of problem solving operations carried out within a meaningful relationship. The end of this process is contained in its means: to influence the client person that he/she develops effectiveness in coping with his/her problem and /or to so influence the problem as to resolve it or reduce its effects. As the social worker develops skill in the problem-solving process, thinking about the phenomena being confronted will begin to take place in orderly steps. These steps appear to be simple but are quite complex in application. Sal Hofstein states: "Process refers to the recurrent patterning of a sequence of change over time and in a particular direction." It is important to note three qualities of this process:

1) recurrent patterning or stages 2) takes place over time 3) in a particular direction (the process is irreversible). The problem-solving process as used in social work has its source in the classic work of **John Dewey** and in his description of the thought process used by human beings when confronted with difficult situations. Social work problem solving is finding a way through feeling, thinking, and acting. It progresses over time in a cyclical, irreversible manner that is focused on removing blocks to need fulfillment that individuals cannot remove with their own resources.

In order to understand what the case work process must include in its problem-solving help, it is necessary for the social case worker to take stock first of the kinds of blockings which occur in people's normal problem-solving effort. These six are among the most common:

1. A problem cannot be solved if the necessary tangible means and resources are not available to the person. A client, for instance, may see and assess his/her problem and its solution accurately and may lack only the material provision for it.
2. Sometimes, people are unable to solve their problems simply out of ignorance or misapprehension about the facts of the problems or the facts of existing ways of meeting it.
3. A problem is difficult of resolution when the person who has depleted or drained of emotional or physical energy. He/she needs to mobilized himself/herself-"pull himself together"- when he/she must plan and act according to plan.
4. When problems sets off a conflagration of feeling, a person's thought processes, delicately attuned as they are to his/her emotions become clouded and tumbled about.
5. The problem may lie within the person: i.e, he/she may have become subject to, or victim of, emotions that chronically, over a long time have governed his/ her thinking and action.
6. Some people find problems in solving a difficult situation because they have never developed systematic habits of orderly methods of thinking and planning. So, the difficulty lies chiefly in the person's lack of experience in organizing his/her power to grapple with problems. In the case work relationship, a constant medium is provided that is accepting, nurturing and supporting at

the same time that the stimulus of problem-solving work is injected to promote the client's effort to feel, to be or to act in the ways leading to his/her better social adjustment. The case work process sustains and fortifies the functions of the client's ego. The first part of the case work process, as in all problem-solving, is to ascertain and clarify the facts of the problem. The second aspect of case work problem-solving grows out of and interweaves with the ongoing eliciting of facts, it is thinking through the facts. The conclusive phase of each problem-solving effort in case work is the making of some choice or decision.

Stages of Problem-solving Process

1. Preliminary statement of the problem,
2. Statement of preliminary assumptions about the nature of the problem,
3. Selection and collection of information,
4. Analysis of information available,
5. Development of a plan,
6. Implementation of the plan, and
7. Evaluation of the plan.

1) **Preliminary statement of the problem**-A clear statement of the problem is necessary before processing to subsequent steps. Often, problem statement tends to be vague, global, and lacking in precision. For example, school dropouts or unwed mothers are often referred to as problems. A more adequate formulation in the area of unwed mothers might be: lack of educational resources for teenage pregnant girls. In this statement, the need of the individual and society is education.

2) **Statement of preliminary assumptions about the nature of the problem**-This step is necessary to help make explicit the type of information needed for understanding and planning. As the problem is stated, implicit assumptions are made about its nature and cause, which provide indications as to the need in the situation and as to the block to need fulfillment.

3) **Selection and collection of information**-Sources for information should include a variety of perspectives that may be chosen from historical, social-psychological, biological, economic, political, religious, and ethical understandings. Both the facts of the problem itself and the meaning of the problem to those concerned are important. Skill in the collection of information also calls for skill in communication and social interaction with persons who are sources of the information. The values of social work call for the client to be a primary source. There is a need to determine and accumulate relevant evidence about the situation, and this evidence needs to be related to the salient features of the situation.

4) **Analysis of information available**- Analysis of information is influenced and directed by the purpose for which the analysis is to be used. Other purposes include determination of feasible goals and possible outcomes and of possible plans of action, interpretation of the meaning of the information gathered, and evaluation. The cyclical nature of the process becomes very apparent, for one returns to analysis as an ingredient of each step of the process. The carrying out of the process generates new information.

5) **Development of a plan**-Information and its analysis lead to understanding of what can be done to remove obstacles blocking need fulfillment. A social worker uses assessment in

developing a plan of action. Plans develop from a consideration of a variety of possible strategies and techniques. As a plan becomes more specific, the social worker will return to early steps in the process to gather and analyze new information needed for the specifics of planning. Consideration of a variety of plans is important in creative planning.

6) **Implementation of the plan**-In social work, implementation involves interaction between people and is interventive in nature. It is action based on thinking that has its source in feelings about concern or need. In addition, it is action based on substantial knowledge from many sources that explain and predict behaviour of persons in the situation.

7) **Evaluation of the plan**- This step may result in redefinition of the problem, expanded Information gathering and analysis, of reformulation of the plan. If the goal has been reached, evaluation is an appropriate and necessary climax to the process. Regardless of the outcome of the plan, evaluation of what happened can lead to an understanding that can be transferred to other situations and to more effective problem solving in those situations.