

Professional Identification Paper
SOCW 413
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When I was younger, the term social worker was a frightening word for me. I had the same impression that thousands of other people have which is that social workers are unfeeling, inconsiderate, untrustworthy, and over-bearing. These are the same people who come into your home and remove children from their families for no apparent reasons. Social workers were deemed people who disrupted, and destroy the lives of family and children whom they come in contact with. Even though I got older, I continued to carry around this stereotype simply because of the lack of knowledge I had about the profession which is typically where most stereotypes and biases come into play. It has just been within the past few years that my eyes were opened to the field of social work and how it was designed to assist families and children not hurt them. Strangely enough it was a local television show that peaked my interest in this profession. The show was about a social worker who spent most of her life fighting for families and children in her community. She fought on a daily basis to protect children who have been severely abused and or neglected by their parents or guardians and a lot of the time she was fighting policies and laws within her agency that were initially created to work for these children but in some form were working against the process. A vulnerable population such as children needed someone to stand up and fight for them and this social worker did it with so much passion, dedication, and competence that I wanted to be her. I was amazed with how she maintained her dignity and integrity with every case. Her primary goal was to help people in need and to challenge social injustices whenever she saw them. She was not afraid to challenge or confront anyone who may have seemed not

to have the best interest of these children in mind no matter what the cost. She was a perfect example of a professional who lived by the code of ethics and although she was just a television character, I knew that somehow I could be her.

I have learned so much during my student career as a beginning social worker but within all the knowledge, I have also gained the ethical values and principles needed to conduct myself in a dignified and professional manner. These are values that will remain with me throughout not only my professional life but my personal life as well. I feel that my ethical responsibilities' are the most important thing I have to offer my future clients within practice. The three specific principles I feel are the most important to me include 1) Dignity and worth of the person. I have been in many situations in my life where I was treated inferior to the professional I was working with; due to this fact, I know how it feels to be treated as a worthless or uneducated person and I will do everything in my power to make sure that I am not the one responsible for making any other individual feel that same way. I as a social work professional will treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of each individual's differences, cultural and ethnic diversity as stated in the code of ethics.

2) Competence; I feel that it is my duty not just as a social worker but as a respectable human being to be knowledgeable within the area of practice I will be working in. People are counting on me to make decisions for them that are going to benefit and or assist them not hurt them. The decisions I make should be based on a professional knowledge

and a developed skill. I hold the lives of families in my hands and their futures depend on my professional competence. I take that very serious.

3) Social Justice; Social workers are responsible for challenging any social injustices seen within the community or society as a whole. I believe we are meant to be the voice for vulnerable and oppressed individuals. It is our duty to fight for social change and to ensure equal access to needed information, services, and resources for all people regardless of sexual orientation, gender, race, age or ethnicity. I am personally a strong believer in equality and diversity within society and I tend to become very angry and frustrated when I see inequality, discrimination and prejudice used as a way to hold another individual down. If there is in fact an “American Dream” in this country, I feel that this should be attainable for everyone who inspires to have it and that is my goal as a social worker to make sure everyone has access to achieving their dreams and goals.

In my field agency each of the social work’s core values are equally important. I am working with a very vulnerable population which is children. As a professional social worker, I am obligated to elevate service to others above my own self-interest, to focus on forms of social injustice, to treat each person with the utmost dignity and respect, to understand the relationship between the children and their micro system, to be aware of my personal values, and ethical standards and lastly to practice within my area of expertise or competence.

While writing this paper on my professional development, I came to the realization that I AM HUMAN and in the process of learning and implementing the code

of ethics into my professional career, I will make mistakes but I feel that what will make me a great social worker is to acknowledge those mistakes and make changes to correct them. In addition, I fear that as I engage in practice that my feelings may become a barrier for me. I am not speaking about prejudices or biases toward any certain population, I am speaking about the sadness, anger, disappointment and frustration I will feel geared at those whom have abused or neglected innocent children. I ask myself how do I look in the face of a child abuser or child molester and begin to work a plan of action with them to assist them in regaining custody of that abused child. This will be a great challenge for me.

While interning within the DCS agency, I have realized how important communication and a good working relationship is with my colleagues. I shall work to treat colleagues with respect and professionalism. I also believe that it is important to avoid negative criticism of colleagues in communication with them, a client, or another colleague. As the bible says, "treat others as you would want to be treated". One strength I feel I do have when working with others is that I am a genuine and caring person whom can make friends with just about anyone. One weakness however is that I tend to become intimidated when working with superiors. I need to work on being more assertive in getting my point across.

As I soon transition from my student career into my professional career, I will continue my education and training to strengthen and enhance my skills and abilities to be the most competent social worker I can be. I will work to be open minded to any

advice or suggestions given to me by colleagues and supervisors and I will perform my duties as ethically and responsibly as I possibly can. This will ensure that at the end of the day when I leave work, I can hold my head up high and feel confident that I did a good job for my clients and my agency. I will adhere to the commitments that I have made to my employer and myself. Overall, I will be the person and professional I have been trained to be.