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Professional career development

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BMSW4005

Reflective portfolio

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Introduction

Within this report I will identify my chosen career path and the skills and knowledge required for this role, against the skills I have and what I need to work on. I will use analytical tools, learned in class, to help me do this. I will also evaluate my skills in comparison to my chosen career based on my knowledge and qualification.

Following this I will access and reflect on the concepts I have learnt during this module. I will reflect on everything learnt in class, I will use reflective models such as Gibbs to help me analyse my experience on this model. I will also reflect on the various concepts I have learnt in this module as regards to career development.

Career choice

My chosen career path will be social work. I have chosen this career path because I would like to help children and make a difference whilst helping overcome challenges in people's lives.

Skills and knowledge needed

There are many skills required to become a Social Worker as well as knowledge needed. Such as;

Empathy – Understanding how to be empathic does not come naturally to all, it sometimes requires a learnt process for a person to be empathetic. empathy is a skill that allows us to understand and share the feelings of others. This will help social workers to appreciate a client's circumstances and their point of view. This also enables social workers to build stronger relationships with families. NASW defines it as "the act of perceiving, understanding, experiencing and responding to the emotional state and ideas of another person."

Communication – most people believe they communicate effectively in reality this is usually not the case. Understanding effective communication needs to be a two-way street. Communication is important skill for a social worker to possess both verbal and non-verbal is a vital skill. The ability to communicate with clients and professions is essential. Social workers will need to document and report information in a clear manner.

Organisation – I was not naturally organised; however, this is a learnt behaviour for me. I learned how to be organised by increasing my knowledge base on how organisation contributes to my skill sets. social workers have many cases and a high work load it is essential to be organised. There is a wide range of responsibilities and many clients, social workers will need to be able to prioritize and manage cases. Disorganisation and bad time keeping could cause a social worker to make mistakes and have a negative outcome.

Critical thinking – this skill helps to analyse information gained from unbiased observation and communicating. Social workers must be able to get information by objectively evaluating each case. Thinking critically will help with observations, interviews and research. Thus, enabling social workers to make informed decisions. I use my knowledge of organisation to allow critical thinking to be present throughout my work.

Active listening – listening is a major part when social working to establish and understanding a client's needs. Listening and asking the right questions helps social workers to engage and have a client's trust.

Self-care – social work is extremely demanding and emotionally stressful, this meaning it important to obtain a healthy work – life balance. Self-care is engaging in things that help destress and improve health and well-being. This is essential to having a sustainable career. Cultural competence – it is natural to understand your own Culture, however, to understand others you must research and communicate to ensure your knowledge base is as vast as possible. social worker work with people from diverse backgrounds this requires social workers to be respectful and responsive to cultural beliefs and practises. Being diverse and possessing a non-judgemental attitude allows social workers to provide clients with what they need.

Patience – social workers must work with an array of circumstances and individuals within their work. It is essential for social workers to have patience to work with difficult cases and clients for the best outcomes.

Professional commitment – social workers must commit to lifelong learning and to social work values and ethics. Ethics is not just a skill, Code of ethics must be applied through knowledge and understanding,

Advocacy - social workers need advocacy skills to promote social justice, these skills allow social workers to empower clients and argue on their behalf. To become an effective advocate, you must understand the Law and how to apply this to ensure you do right by the person you are advocating for.

I learned how to compose a PDP in my lectures to support me to analyse and become more self-aware. Whilst reviewing my personal development plan and the skills needed to proceed in my chosen career path, I believe that I do possess many of the skills needed to become a social worker, although I need to develop my qualifications to be able to be successful applicant for social work.

From previous employment and life skills, I am a very patient person, I have great empathy and excellent communication skills. I am an active listener and have great organisation skills. I have worked with a variety of people from many cultural backgrounds, giving me the skills, I need to be successful. For example, I recently supported a neighbour who needed support accessing the benefits services. As English was her second language we spoke in broken English. I allowed her time to speak without interrupting. I needed to actively listen as her English was not fluid. Once I understood what was needed, I organised in order of services she required, supported her in accessing them online and arranged a face-to-face meeting for her with a benefits Officer. This shows the skills I am competent with however, the skills I need to improve on to become a successful social worker are critical thinking and advocacy skills, I need to develop in these areas.

I understand that although I am confident and I will complete my goal of being a social worker, I need to ensure I have a 'back up plan' and consider all options if this is not to be. There are many different paths I can take to help vulnerable people if I am unsuccessful as a social worker, such as family support worker or family liaison. I want to make a difference and help children that are in the system and be a support system for them and make life easier for them and give support to families who need it. I know I will be successful with in this industry whether it be Social Work or an alternative.

After researching options, according to healthcare careers NHS there are no set qualifications needed to apply to be a healthcare support worker or a family liaison officer, you need a skill set I am already familiar with.

Assessing and reflecting on the concepts I have learnt on this module and how it will help me progress and develop in my career path. I have learnt how to be more self-aware and what tools to use to do this. I have developed my own personal development plan and used it to evaluate myself.

Personal development plan

Personal goal	When I want to achieve this	How I can improve my chances of meeting this goal	Where I can get support to help achieve this goal	Review, how plan is going
Complete and pass health and safety level 4	Jan 2023	Attend all classes and submit all work on time Ensure I engage in any offered additional learning	Study skills classes and student services Any online courses	All modules passed so far
Complete level and pass 5 & 6	Jan 2023-2025	Attend all classes and submit all work on time Ensure I always apply myself Reach out for support and early intervention if required.	Study skills classes and student services Lecturers Peers	
Complete social worker qualification	2025	Complete all courses with good grades and a successful application on to selected course Increase my knowledge base Offer volunteering services to gain practical experience	Seek advice from careers advisor Independent research Reach out to key stakeholders IE: local authority	

Using reflective models helped to analyse my experience on this module and put together an action plan

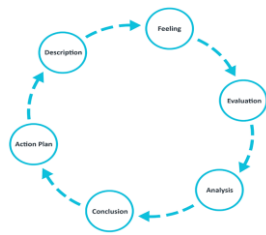


Diagram A Gibbs reflective cycle

Gibbs has been proven by many researchers and studies to be a recommended tool in reflective literacy.

I found it especially useful when evaluating what I had learnt on the module. Looking back on CV writing and our mock interviews, I found that learning more about these concepts made me feel more confident in my approach to exploring my employment opportunities.

After learning in more depth what should and should not be on a CV, I recomposed mine to give me a better chance at being successful. I learnt how to sell myself, by watching motivational speaking and doing more research. By doing this I found it helpful when it came round our mock interview, I was less nervous and more confident in myself. I enjoyed this as it made me believe in myself more.

Also learning about our learning styles and how they impact our career and how we were viewed in the workplace, I have elements of a variety of learning styles. I have a mixture of an activist and a reflector. These learning styles impact how you are seen in the workplace and how you progress within your career. An activist will learn by being involved in the task, whereas a reflector will review and reflect whilst standing back, listening, and thinking. Both are seen to have strengths and weaknesses. Activist will be looked on as getting the job done but at what cost? They will take on too much of themselves and take unnecessary risk to get the job done. A reflector will be thoughtful and careful, being an incredibly good problem solver, but seen to be a day dreamer, asking lots of questions without producing any work. Seen to be very indecisive. Thus, all impacting the way our careers develop. I believe it is better to have a good balance of each learning style. Being this way, we are more likely to take advantage and opportunity of learning and developing at work and throughout our career. Ultimately learning and developing through your career is the key to long term employability.

Another concept I enjoyed learning and found interesting was employment law. There are many different laws and legislations that come in to play in many areas concerning work. These laws are there to protect us and our rights throughout the recruitment process, while at work and for any grievances or disciplines and dismissal and redundancies. The two most prominent laws are the Equality act 2010 and the Employment rights act 1996.

“Employment law regulates the relationship between employers and employees. It governs what employers can expect from employees, what employers can ask employees to do, and employees’ rights at work.” (CIPD)

These laws ensure we know our rights as an employee and protect us against any discrimination, harassment or wrongful termination.

Conclusion

In conclusion of my reflective report this module has helped me identify my chosen career path the skills needed to ensure I am successful and the qualifications I will need to attain.

I have learnt vital tools to help me critically analyse myself and put together a short term and long-term plan, as to where I want to be and how I am going to get there. As well as now possessing these new skills, I now feel I have grown so much and added to my existing skills. I am more organised and have better time management skills.

Overall, this module has helped me be more self-aware. I have learnt lots about myself and my learning styles. My knowledge has expanded, and my confidence has grown. I believe I now have a much better idea of my own personal and professional career development, what this will entail and where it can take me throughout my life. I have a better plan of where I want my career path to go, both short term and long term. I know what I must do and the next steps to take. I feel I am more organised and by having plan know where I am going and how this will develop my professional career.

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