

Professional Career Development Report and Role play

(interviewee and interviewer)

Assessment 2

Reflective Report

Name: Zinetty Bonfim Dos Prazeres

Student ID: 2123461

Lecturer's name: Ogo Agunenyne

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1. Introduction

In this reflective report for the Professional Development (Health and Social Care) module, I will explore my emotions and reflections regarding the recent classroom role-play activity conducted in partnership with a fellow student, utilizing Gibbs' reflective cycle as a framework.

2. Career Path

Description

In my opinion, social work is an extremely varied and important career. It all comes down to assisting individuals, families, and communities in improving their well-being and navigating life's many challenges. Social workers operate in a range of situations, addressing issues ranging from poverty and abuse to mental health challenges. The commitment to ethical practices, emphasizing respect for every individual's dignity and variety, is at the heart of social work (NASW, 2017; Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2016; Hepworth et al., 2017).

Feelings

When I consider the difficulties that social workers encounter, I am filled with admiration and worry. The emotional toll and resource constraints they frequently face make me nervous, but I admire their fortitude. Balancing their rigorous profession with personal well-being can be taxing, but given their tremendous societal influence, it can also be immensely satisfying (Lloyd et al., 2019).

Evaluation

While social work is obviously difficult, the rewards are significant in my opinion. Emotional strain and resource constraints are significant drawbacks, but the beneficial effects for individuals and communities, together with the practice's ethical integrity, truly make it a noble profession (NASW, 2017; Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2016).

Analysis

Strong support networks and resilience, in my opinion, are essential given the challenges faced by social workers, including handling crises, complex ethical issues, and worries about personal safety. These difficulties emphasise the necessity of ongoing education and expert assistance to successfully navigate this hard subject (Reamer, 2013; Lloyd et al., 2019).

Conclusion

Social work is, in my opinion, both difficult and necessary. To manage a variety of obstacles, including emotional strain, moral conundrums, and striking a balance between work and personal life, practitioners require thorough training. I can see that continuing education, both personal and professional, is necessary for successful practice in this area (Reamer, 2013; Lloyd et al., 2019).

Action Plan

In addition to pushing for increased funding and helpful networks, I think it's critically to prioritise professional growth and self-care techniques in order to advance in this field. As I have demonstrated here, reflective practice on a regular basis can also help to improve service quality and navigate the difficulties of social work (NASW, 2017; Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2016; Hepworth et al., 2017).

3. Current Skills

Description

To achieve success in social work, it's imperative for professionals to have a comprehensive skill set that covers both personal interaction and professional capabilities. Empathy is at the heart of this, essential for building trust with clients, supplemented by effective verbal and non-verbal communication, as well as the capacity to tackle complex client issues. Strong organizational skills are necessary for managing large caseloads and efficiently working within various systems. Equally important is cultural competency, which involves appreciating and understanding the diverse backgrounds of clients. Advocacy skills are crucial in upholding clients' rights and addressing social injustices. Practicing self-care is also key to preventing burnout in this demanding field. Ethical decision-making plays a critical role, especially in challenging situations. Being flexible and adaptable to changing scenarios and client needs, along with possessing strong critical thinking skills, is indispensable for making well-informed decisions. These abilities, coupled with continuous professional development and a dedication to the tenets of social work, are essential for thriving in this dynamic and fulfilling profession (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2016; Hepworth et al., 2017; NASW, 2015; Reamer, 2013; Lloyd et al., 2019).

Feelings

I am aware of my strengths in empathy, nonverbal communication, ethical understanding, and adaptability, which fuels my eagerness for a career in social work. I am conscious of my shortcomings in certain areas, yet I am resolute in my commitment to develop and enhance these skills.

Evaluation

Despite my desire to enhance talents that I lack, I am aware that I will face obstacles along the way. After all, a social worker's work begins with their education. I feel I can learn the remaining abilities with practice and encouragement from others.

Analysis

Not being compatible with the job of a social worker can stem from various factors, often related to the mismatch between an individual's skills, attributes, or preferences and the demands of the profession. Understanding these factors is crucial, as they significantly impact the effectiveness and satisfaction of a social worker in their role. (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2016).

Conclusion

I am on the right path towards becoming a successful social worker. My current skill set is a solid foundation, and my willingness to learn and grow in areas where I am lacking is crucial for my future success in this field.

Action Plan

I plan to continue my education in social work, seek out practical experiences to enhance my skills, especially in areas where I am weaker, and learn from experienced care assistants. I will also emphasize developing and maintaining compassion in my interactions, as this is essential for providing high-quality care.

4. Gap in Skills

I currently do not possess a broad set of skills, including organizational capabilities, critical thinking, conflict resolution, and teamwork and collaboration. However, I anticipate developing these skills once I begin working as a care assistant and could apply my learning in practice.

Lacking organizational skills in social work can lead to several significant issues. Without these skills, social workers may struggle with inefficient case management, leading to overlooked client needs and less effective support. Poor time management can result in missed deadlines

and an inability to handle high work volumes. Inadequate record-keeping due to poor organization can have serious legal and ethical implications, affecting continuity of care. Mismanagement of resources can negatively impact service delivery and client support. Furthermore, the lack of organizational abilities can hinder effective collaboration with other professionals, leading to miscommunications and care coordination issues. This deficiency can also increase professional stress and risk of burnout, affecting job satisfaction and overall performance in the field (Hepworth et al., 2017).

In social work, a lack of critical thinking skills can lead to a few serious problems. Social workers may struggle with problem-solving if they lack the ability to analyse information and make informed decisions, resulting in ineffective or inappropriate solutions for client difficulties. Poor decision-making can emerge from a failure to objectively examine events, potentially leading to interventions that are not in the best interests of the client. Lack of critical thinking can also make it more difficult for social workers to resolve moral conundrums, which could result in moral transgressions. It may hinder how best practices and new information are integrated, which would restrict professional growth. Furthermore, the absence of critical thinking makes it more difficult to collaborate effectively with other professionals and empower clients because critical thinking is necessary to comprehend other viewpoints and consider solutions. In general, the quality of client outcomes and service delivery can be considerably reduced by a deficiency of critical thinking (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2018; Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2016; NASW, 2017; Lloyd et al., 2019).

Lacking teamwork and collaboration skills in social work can significantly hinder a practitioner's effectiveness. Without these skills, a social worker may face difficulties in coordinating services efficiently, miss out on diverse perspectives and solutions, experience poor communication with other professionals, and lose valuable learning opportunities. Furthermore, the inability to work effectively in a team can increase individual workload and stress, leading to potential burnout, and pose challenges in multidisciplinary environments where collaboration is key. These limitations emphasize the importance of teamwork and collaboration skills in ensuring comprehensive and effective client care in social work. (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2018).

5. Systematic Approach to Skills acquisition

To improve organizational skills as a social work student, I may consider adopting a structured routine for effective time management, prioritizing tasks using tools like the Eisenhower Box, and enhancing notetaking with methods like the Cornell Method. Setting SMART goals can help me in achieving specific objectives efficiently. Maintaining a planner or digital calendar is crucial for keeping track of important dates and deadlines. Utilizing digital tools for organizing notes and assignments, like cloud storage solutions, can also be beneficial. Regular feedback and mentorship from faculty or field supervisors can provide valuable insights into your organizational strategies. Engaging in reflective learning helps in identifying areas for improvement. Additionally, balancing academic responsibilities with self-care activities is important for overall well-being (Allen, 2015).

To overcome a lack of critical thinking as a social work student, I need to engage in reflective practice to deepen understanding of your work and thought processes (Schön, 1983). Expose myself to diverse perspectives through reading and discussions and cultivate a habit of questioning assumptions and evidence (Brookfield, 2012; Paul & Elder, 2014). Analyze case studies to apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations and participate in debates and discussions to sharpen analytical skills (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2018). Embrace problem-based learning for real-life problem-solving (Hmelo-Silver, 2004), and familiarize myself with critical thinking frameworks like Bloom's Taxonomy (Paul & Elder, 2014). Seek regular feedback from instructors and peers, and practice reflective writing to develop a critical approach to problem-solving (Schön, 1983; Moon, 2013). Stay updated with the latest research in social work to foster critical evaluation of new information (Hepworth et al., 2017).

Start by learning about conflict resolution theories and models as a social work student to overcome a lack of conflict resolution abilities (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 2011). Improve my active listening abilities to better understand and participate in conflicts (Rogers & Farson, 1957). Use role-playing and simulations to put these theories into practice. Empathy can help me grasp diverse points of view in a quarrel. Improve my communication abilities to have clearer, more productive conversations (Bolton, 1986). Learn how to use mediation approaches to facilitate conversations and reach agreements. Seek feedback and reflect on my conflict resolution experiences to improve over time (Schön, 1983). Participate in workshops and training sessions to learn from experts. Recognise and respect cultural differences in conflict resolution (LeBaron, 2003).

Work on understanding and respecting different points of view. For peaceful and efficient team collaboration, empathy and respect are essential (Segal & Smith, 2020).

6. Recruitment and Selection

Description

We participated in a role-play exercise, simulating a job interview process, where we alternated roles as interviewer and interviewee. The task involved formulating and asking five interview questions. I began as the interviewer, maintaining a serious demeanor to appear professional and in control, as suggested by Lees (2016). However, this approach may have been too intimidating, as noted by Tran (2017), making the interviewee uncomfortable. In the role of the interviewee, I felt slightly nervous but managed to maintain a calm exterior, focusing on answering questions thoroughly, though possibly at the expense of appearing friendly and approachable, as Hochschild (1983) indicates the importance of smiling. A lack of smiling can be interpreted as unfriendliness or disinterest, potentially creating a cold or unwelcoming atmosphere.

Feelings

As the interviewer, I felt calm and aimed for professionalism through seriousness, but I later realized this might have created an unwelcoming atmosphere, since it was possible to see the interviewee a little bit uncomfortable. As an interviewee, I was a bit nervous but tried not to let it show, focusing on giving detailed answers and I think it was the best approach at the time.

Evaluation

My approach as an interviewer was professional but perhaps too intimidating, which could hinder an interviewee's ability to open up. As an interviewee, maintaining calm was positive, but I could have been more engaging with a smile.

Analysis

Balancing professionalism with approachability is key. While seriousness can convey professionalism, it's also important to create a welcoming atmosphere. In the interviewee role, hiding nervousness was good for professionalism, but I could have been more personable.

Conclusion

Reflecting on my performance in both the interviewer and interviewee roles, I've realized the importance of balancing professionalism with approachability. As an interviewer, my attempt to maintain a serious and professional demeanor, while well-intentioned, may have inadvertently created an intimidating atmosphere, potentially hindering the interviewee's ability to express themselves fully and authentically. This observation aligns with Tran's (2017) insights about the impact of excessive seriousness. Conversely, as an interviewee, while I

successfully managed to conceal my nervousness, maintaining a too-serious facade might have limited my ability to appear friendly and engaging, which is crucial for making a positive impression, as Hochschild (1983) notes the importance of first impressions and approachability.

Action Plan

To enhance how I perform in future interviews, both in the roles of interviewer and interviewee, I have devised a set of strategies informed by this reflective process: I aim to develop a communication style that is both professional and warm, focusing not just on what I communicate but also on the manner of delivery – such as maintaining a friendly tone, smiling, and using open gestures. Additionally, I plan to engage in more simulated interviews, where I will actively seek input on my approach and the ambiance I establish, relying on feedback from my peers and mentors to track my progress and pinpoint areas needing improvement. Finally, when possible, I will observe seasoned professionals conducting interviews, either in person or through media, to gain practical insights into effectively managing various aspects of interview situations.

7. Conclusion and recommendations

Social workers play a critical role in promoting good social change, improving well-being, and advocating for and supporting individuals, families, and communities confronting a variety of obstacles. Being a student of social work, however, comes with its own set of difficulties, such as learning a wide variety of abilities from critical thinking to sympathetic communication, juggling a heavy course load, and getting ready for emotionally taxing situations in the workplace. To be ready for the challenging yet fulfilling duties of a social worker, one must strike a balance between the development of practical skills and rigorous academic work.

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