

By critically exploring how the social working professionals are sectioned off into each separate professions, Advocacy and Social worker, an investigation into how different, yet how similar, these two social working professions can, and do cross over with the intersectionality of the very similar professional work will be conducted. The British Association of Social Work/Workers (BASW) has members, seemingly a type of union, and this essay will critically explore if being a member of this association would be advantageous for an advocate, or if it would undermine the professions principles, or if it would support and therefore provide a professional accreditation to the role of an advocate. Looking further into the professional standards that these two professions hold; comparisons will be made to observe if whether an Advocate should become a member of the BASW association. Looking closely at either profession's principles, and core values, exploring if an Advocate could, or indeed should, become a member. There will also be constructive criticism and comparison on how a social worker commands the help of the benefits agency for their client, yet the advocate guides their client to empower themselves into the rights they have for benefits.

Ezell (2001) suggests that within social work advocacy is used when change is required for policies and practices, in order to facilitate their vulnerable client's needs, thus indicating the intersectionality between the two professions (Ezell, 2001). It could be then argued that social work and advocacy are needed in both sections of social working, which in turn suggests that both a social worker is an advocate and an advocate is also a social worker. There are many Advocacy services that provide service users with different types of advocacy, one of which is Advocacy in Action, who received 3 national honours including an award called "Social work today" equal opportunities award in 1991, confirming how the social working professionals see advocacy (Advocacy in Action 2002). This service holds the principles of advocacy close to their core and state that an early principle they hold is 'We do not come to work to make machines-we work together to make people' (Advocacy In Action 2002) which simplifies yet,

differentiates, between how an advocate sees their role in social working. According to Freddolinio et al (2004) 'social work advocates may engage in the most adversarial forms of advocacy' emphasising how complex the role of an advocate can be whilst working in social advocacy (Freddolinio et al (2004 p124). It was also noted that there could be conflicts between social worker relationships and the clients need for "formal advocacy", due to the social workers code of ethics. According to Wilks (2012) 'A key goal of social work is to find a route to a set of circumstances where that person is enabled to speak for themselves' (Wilks, 2012) and so it could be assumed that a social worker does indeed lends itself more towards advocacy.

In order to investigate further if an advocate should become a member of BASW comparisons between the Codes of Practice For Social Care Workers (General Social Care Council (GSCC) 2010) and the Advocacy QPM Code of Practice (Advocacy QPM, 2014) should be made. Due to the two professions being in the "social working" sector, and as social workers accredit themselves as having to become advocates within their professional role (GSCC 2010), taking into consideration for the similarities between the roles. It could be claimed that the Advocacy Charter has taken the Codes of Practice for Social care (GSCC,2010) and have adapted them to become a more simplified and holistic set of principles as guidance for Advocates. For example the first code of Practice for Social Workers states 'As a social care worker, you must protect the rights and promote the interests of service users and carers' (GSCC, 2010). The Advocates Charter have taken this first code of practice, enumerated it even more giving exhaustive account of how an advocate has a 'Person Centred Approach' (Advocacy Charter 2014) creating a more holistic view of how an advocate should 'ensure advocacy support is appropriate to the clients needs and /or expressed' further clarifying that an advocate should 'take instruction from clients where they have the capacity to instruct or take instruction from a third party' (Advocacy Charter (2014), therefore giving characterisations of what should be expected of an advocate.

Advocates do not have an association that is currently a support network for themselves. There is no association for advocates to be part of, but is there a need for an association for advocates? According to Schneider and Lester (2001) advocacy within a social working environment means ‘representing of clients or a cause in a forum attempting to systematically influence decision making in an unjust or unresponsive system’ (Schneider and Lester 2001 p65). With restraints of rules and regulations from an association, an advocate would not be free from bias, if they were part of an association, governing with rules and regulations that may conflict with the ideology of advocacy. An advocate must abide by forms of regulations which are outlined in the advocacy charter (Advocacy Charter 2009), but these are more guidelines which define advocacy, than a regulatory body that advocates have to report to. It could be argued that as professionals must be part of the BASW it is therefore being a ruling body to adhere to policies and practice.

The Older People’s Partnership Services (OPP) have had a good relationship with Advocacy in Action and original introductions were made by a social worker assistant, which again exemplifies the intersectionality between these two professions (Gosling J & Martin J (2012).

Ife (2008) argues ‘for the powerless and the disadvantaged it may well be argued that the last thing they need is to have yet another person, however well-intended, speaking on their behalf’ (Ife 2008), when discussing an individual case advocacy, and so this would show how advocacy without the alliance of social workers, clients can feel as though their voice is being smothered. Contradictorily Ife (2008) then explains how without “empowerment frame work” the advocate can then educate the client to be less reliant on their social worker, thus becoming empowered and able to use their voice (Ife 2008).

In order to become a Social Worker it is a requirement for them to have studied specific courses, gain accredited education, have a social Worker degree or MA, and then proceeded to attain practice, whilst under supervision, for a certain time frame , usually a year (Smith J, 2019). It could therefore be logical that with only limited practice of work, life and experience anyone could describe themselves as an advocate. Would it then become, on a more professional endorsement, a member of BASW, in order to be acknowledged, respected, as a expert in the social working field and have recognition of their skills and work ethics.

Speaking at a conference R,Ronning, regarding care for the older person,

“Empowerment at the individual level is, we would argue, about having the power to exercise choice and expert control over one’s life. Older people needing ‘care’ are seen as dependent, as unable to exercise choice and control and as needing somebody to be responsible for them, rather than responsible to them” (Ronning,2002 cited in Clarke and Spafford,2002:).

It could be contended that some people, as previously stated the elderly, could feel that they are seen as ‘suffering’ a socially constructed dependency as a result of their subjugation to care provided by others within the social care model (Fine,M D 2007 p24). The feelings could be due to the dependency created by social workers upon themselves by the older clients and disempowering their clients, thus creating anti-oppressive practice (Fine,M D 2007 p24) The constraints of the social workers ethics lends into the ideology of advocacy, maybe not intentionally, and so an advocate, empowering and creating independent clients, would in fact be going against their guiding Advocacy Charter by becoming a member of the British Association of Social worker/working (GCC 2010).

If comparing the definition of Social Work and Advocacy, both professions link into the promotion of fighting social injustice. The definition of Social worker states, 'Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities....' (BASW ND). Collective responsibility could be interpreted as meaning that the clients has to take the "collective responsibility", or it could be interpreted as the way in which the social worker has a collective responsibility for not just their actions but also the actions of their client (BASW ND). In both definitions securing a person's human rights is mentioned and similarities can be seen to both these roles, and yet Advocates do not openly publicise obtaining membership to BASW. It is noted that The Advocacy Charter (2009) clearly states the empowerment factor to a person (The Advocacy Charter,2009) and yet in the International definition of Social work (2014) is more directed at changing lives and creating structure. It could then be reasoned that a Social Worker, by definition, is there to create a structure for society, creating conformity, than to stand up for society wanting to streamline and unify their clients.

By using Maslow's (1979) Hierarchy of Needs model we are able to compare and contrast how both social workers and advocates enable support to individuals in their care. Looking at the first level of this model, physical needs, a social worker would apply their skills in order to attain housing for a client, possibly by contacting the housing department on behalf of the client. An advocate would discuss with the client what the client needs and wants are for housing, where they would like to live and in what sort of property, with a more holistic view of the client's needs (Maslow 1979). They would then discuss how the client could obtain a new home. The difference between how an advocate would help with housing is through supporting the client to obtain a home for themselves, walking them through the process of a housing application, and possibly attending a meeting with the housing officer with the client. A social worker would need to get the house for the client, completing the housing application form on their behalf of the client and then obtain the house. Or so it would be thought.

Conferring to Freddolino et al (2004, p121) that a social worker is an advocate for their clients within their role when supporting clients with benefit claims and housing applications, and even being their representation with other professionals (Freddolino et al 2004 p121). Advocates respond to both unstructured and structured problems and according to Doel and Sharlow (2012) in a Social Workers role advocacy is used, but Neil Bateman (2009) claims that a social worker cannot distinguish between clients issues when faced with structured problems and unstructured problems, due to their vision for resolvment is one of “negotiation and assertiveness” (Bateman 2009). A Social Workers perspective of a client’s issues is often seen in a different light to an advocate, with a social workers expertise as being important tools of social working, with their model of advocating being described as internal advocacy, working within a system. It was portrayed by McLoughlin et al (1979) as ‘a continuous and cooperative process of interactions’ supervising the service user to the appropriate help and support (McLoughlin et al 1979). Smith’s (2008) argument is with their specialized power, that they have the possibility of obfuscating the clients problems, with him stating ‘Problems for individuals become defined as problems of the individuals’ (Smith 2008 p111). This approach could change with adoption of a more inclusive and collaborative approach but due to the professional role of the social worker they can create friction and space between themselves and the client which they means the connection with the client can not always be proactive (Wilks 2012).

What power does a social worker have over their client? According to Hasenfield (1987) a social worker has 3 main powers: expertise, persuasion and legitimate, but these powers are always enhanced by the force that fortifies social workers, the organisation or agency that they are part of (Hasenfield,1987). He goes on to explain that within social work a client must have control over their own future and that the agency behind the social worker can only fortify that (Hasenfield 1987), but Hasenfield proceeds with the argument , but as any organisation

operating procedures, policies and decision making all lies in the hands of the organisation, not always the social worker. With the constraints and limitations of resources and the willingness, or not whichever the case maybe, of the organisation to share information , for the greater good of the client in hand (Hasenfield , 1987). Therefore a social worker does not indeed become a person focused practice but is controlled by its organisation/agency, almost resembling to a puppet at the end of the string with the organisation the puppet master in control. Advocates do not look to gain power for themselves, they wish to empower their clients. Using Sherry Arnstein's 'Ladder of Participation' (Arnstein ,1969) an advocate can guide a client from the first two rungs, Manipulation and Therapy, up to the sixth rung of the ladder being partnership. An advocate only wants to empower a client and ultimately get them to the top of the ladder at 'Citizen Control', this is where the client has taken back total control over their lives. A social worker may want this to be true when they help their clients but due to the organisations or agencies that they work under they may only get their client to consultation, rung 4 , or possibly rung 5 placation (Arnstein, 1969).

In conclusion, after discussions have created investigation into the comparison of Social Workers, the way that they could be seen as an advocate, it could appear that joining BASW would be a worthwhile investment in an advocates accreditation in the social work professionals. But by abiding by their 'code of practice', with the 'structural ' concept of advocacy it could be seen as an alliance with the way a social worker works in society may well be seen as "sleeping with the enemy". Advocates are not conformists to societal norms. They "rage against the dying of the light", fighting with their clients and being their scaffolding, holding them up, whilst social workers try to construct their lives. It is felt by the arguments , as constructed above, if an advocate became a member of an association that wants to 'Make machines' they would be going against all that an advocate stands for and would be abandoning their fight for the voices of their clients to be heard, all to be part of a club.

Advocates do hold principles and have value of their work but they do not need to have a membership of an association, with their restrictions, to hold claim that they will always try to do what the clients want, let their clients voice be heard. Social workers are just cogs in a machine and as Action for Advocacy say 'We do not come to work to create machines- we work together to make people' (Action for Advocacy, 2002). It could then be argued that becoming a member of an organisation that restricts the availability of information, resources and that ties the hands of the social worker, does not agree with the principles that an advocate holds so dearly and so why would an advocate want to wear their badge, agree with their policies and restrain their voice? From the investigation above, even with the controversy that it would appear a social worker has to contend with, the evidence and the bare truth of the matter is that by signing a registration form to become a member of The British Association Of Social Work/workers an advocate would be going against their principles of giving their client a voice. This association wants to control the support that a client receives whereas an advocate wants to hold them up, give them all the resources that are available for them to thrive not just be. And so it would not be a recommendation of this research that an advocate becomes a member of The British Association of Social work/workers.

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