UNIT 6 : CASE WORKER -CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

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6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit,you will be able to:

- understand the case worker client relationship.
- analyze the skills of case worker in professional relationship
- understand communication process in social work.

6.2 INTRODUCTION

Social work by nature is a helping profession. The term 'relationship' in case work was used for the first time by Virginia Robinson in her book. 'A Changing Psychology in Social Case Work' in 1939. Relationship is the case worker's responsibility and disciplined use of himself in working with a client. The relationship is the channel through which the mobilization of the capacities of the cilent is made possible. The relationship is the medium through which the cilient is enable to state his problem and through which attention can be focused on reality of his problems whether it is emotional or some conflicts he is going through.

6.3 PROFESSIONAL PURPOSEFUL RELATIONSHIP

Misra (1994) stated that a case work relationship is the professional enabling the client to become better and make. an acceptable adjustment to a his personal problem. A case work relationship is a professional meeting of two persons of assisting one of them, the client, to make a better, a more acceptable adjustment to a personal problem. Within the democratic frame of reference the professional relationship involves a mutual process of shared responsibilities, recognition of other's rights,acceptance of difference,with a goal, not of isolation,but of socialized attitudes and behaviour stimulating growth through interaction. The essence of relationship has been called an interplay,a mutual emotional exchange,an attitude,a dynamic interaction,a medium,a connection between two persons,a professional meeting and a mutual process.The equality and mutuality in a friend-friend relationship is absent in case work. The case worker and the

client are foundamentally equal as human being,but in case work situation the case worker is the helping person. The client is the person receiving help.

The *case work* relationship is the dynamic interaction of attitudes and emotions between the case worker and the client,with the purpose of helping the client achieve a better adjustment between himself and his environment. Thus the purpose of establishing relationship is to help the client with his psycho-social needs and problems.Other purposes are:

1. Better solution of client's problem,
2. Exploiation of means for solving problems,
3. Stating reality and emotional problems,
4. Solution of the personal problem,
5. Development of personality.



Case Work Relationship is the dynamic interaction of attitudes and emotions between the case worker and the client,with the purpose of helping the client achieve a better adjustment between himself and his environment.

6.4 NATURE AND COMPONENTS

Social casework enables an individual to obtain a higher level of social functioning through an interpersonal transaction or face-to-face or person-to-person encounter. The caseworker helps the client to act in order to achieve some personal/social goals by utilising the available resources in terms of strength of personality of the client, his social system or material provisions available in the community and/ or agency. Caseworker's knowledge and expertise, and material resources are used (as tools) to inject strengths in the person to enable him to move more satisfyingly in the social situation he finds difficult to deal with.

Since social functioning is product of interaction among intrapsychic, somatic and social forces, social casework involves assessing the internal and social factors which impair or threaten the person's role performance and helps him to find and use the somatic, psychic and social resources at his disposal to eliminate or reduce malfunction and to enhance functioning in social roles.

A person is the net product of interaction between biological, psychological and environmental (social and physical) factors. The unique

pattern that emerges from this interaction is his personality which comprises of his capacities and abilities, attitudes, beliefs and values, feelings, and thinking and his approach, or strategies to deal with various situations of life.

Individual problems may arise either because of his unsuitable approach to social situations he encounters in his life or because of situations demanding something different or more than he possesses. Both the situations have social and psychological components therefore, these form psycho-social aspects of his life.

Anything that is social, will evoke psychological responses, similarly anything (thinking and feeling) that is occurring at the level of psyche (i.e., psychological), is bound to show in one's social life (verbal or non-verbal interaction). Psyche always works in social context, therefore, his behaviour (social functioning) has both psychological as well as social components. The caseworker intervenes (helps) in any or all of these aspects to enable the person to function adequately and properly in his various social roles.

A person, at every point of the day, performs some role. All his functions are directed to fulfill some role. The case worker may mainly aim at restoring, maintaining or improving the person's functioning (performance in different roles ascribed to or achieved by him) using his knowledge of human behaviour, skills in communication and relationships and the available resources. It is presumed that any person who has some problem with his thinking (cognitive), feeling (affect) or acting or their interaction will not be able to function properly and adequately in his social roles (like that of a father, chairman, citizen, man, scientist, etc.) assigned to or achieved by him.

Social functioning means functioning in different roles one has achieved or has been assigned by society according to his position. Bartlett (1970) defines social functioning as "the interaction between the coping activity of people and the demand from the environment". The caseworker does not offer help to the person only at his personal request but also when the person does not seek/or resists help. In such cases help is offered at the instance of his relatives, public agencies (police, hospitals, etc.) or

community members who feel concerned and are interested to help the person to live a socially useful life.

Case worker, in addition to the person in need of help, may work with those people also who are in some way or other important for solution of the person's problems. The help is offered through a particular process as mentioned before. This process is usually termed as study, diagnosis (assessment), formulation of goals and planning, treatment, evaluation and termination.

Taber & Taber (1985) use Sipron's formulations which are termed as:-

Engagement is equivalent to intake, exploration to study, planning involves assessment and planning for action, intervention is equivalent to treatment and evaluation is done after intervention, followed by termination (disengagement) when the purpose of the client has been served. One can reformulate these phases as engagement, exploration (study), assessment (diagnosis), planning (inclusive of goal-setting), intervention, evaluation and follow up, and disengagement.



The phases of case work relationship are.
(1) Engagement,
(2) Exploration,
(3) Planning,
(4) Intervention,
(5) Evaluation, and
(6) Disengagement.

Thus, social casework, as a helping process, tries to effect a change in the client's behaviour systematically to enable him to achieve what he really needs and to realise his potentials for "living a personally satisfying and socially useful life".And, in this process of helping the client, he offers concrete (protective) services including money and materials, modifies his environment to provide an environment favourable to the required change in him, strengthens and augments his capacities, develops an attitude congenial for growth, effects the desired change in his lifestyle and maintains his emotional equilibrium.

6.5 THE PRINCIPLES OF CASE WORK RELATIONSHIP

Biestek has described seven principles of case work relationship (Misra,1994)

6.5.1. Idividualizaion

Individualization is the recognition and understanding of the client's unique qualities and the differential use of principles and methods in

assisting them towards a better adjustment.Individuation is based upon the right of human being to be individuals and to treated not just as a human being but as this human being with his personal differencs.

6.5.2. Purposeful Expression of Feelings

Client's need to express his feelings freely, especially his negative purposefull expression of feelings is the recognition of thefeelings.The case worker listens purposefully,neither discouraging nor condemning the expression of these feelings,sometimes even actively stively stimulating and encouraging them when they are therapeutically useful as part of the case work service.

6.5.3. Controlled Emotional Involvement

The controlled emotional involvement is the case worker's sensitivity to the client's feelings, an understanding of the meaning, and purposeful, appropriate response to the client's feelings.

6.5.4. Acceptance

Acceptance is a principle of action where in the case worker perceives and deals with the client as he really is, including his strengths and weaknesses, his congenial and uncongenial qualities, his positive and negative feelings, his constructive and destructive attitudes and behaviour maintaining all the while a sense of the client's innate dignity and personal worth...The purpose of acceptances is therapeutic to aid the case worker in understanding the clients as he really is, thus making case work more effective, and to help the client free himself from undesirable defence so that he feels safe to reveal himself and look at himself as he really is and thus to deal with his problem and himself in a more realistic way.

6.5.5. Non-judgmental Attitude

The non-judgmental attitude is quality of case work relationship. It is base on conviction that the case work function excludes assigning guilt or innocence ,or degree of client responsibility for causation of the problems or needs, but does include making evaluative judgments about the attitudes,

standards, or action of the client.

6.5.6. Clients Self-determination

The principle of client self-determination is the practical recognition of the right and need of the client to freedom in making their own choice and decision in the case work process. Case workers have a corresponding duty to active that right, recognize that need, stimulate and help to realize that potential for self direction by helping the client to see and use the avialable and appropriate resources of the community and of his own personality. The client's right to self-determination, however, is 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.

6.5.7. 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 client it is an ethical obligation of the case worker necessary for effective case work service. The client right, however is not absolute. Moreover, the client's secret is often shared with other professional persons within the agency and in other agencies for the benefit of the client and in such situations the obligation binds all equally.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: State the principles of case worker-client relationship.

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6.6 SKILLS IN CASE WORKER-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

6.6.1.Client Assessment Skills:

It is the first opportunity to building a working relationship with the client.

The case worker getsto to know about the clients problem his weakness and strength the client's need and his experience through the interview.After the assessment of the client situation worker can plan strategies for treatment.

6.6.2 Supportive Skills:

The social worker needs the sensitive and supportive skill when they work with the client as the form of emotional support, social support, and empathy. A good social worker can build the clients own supportive power or system which could help them for better outcome.

6.6.3.Empathy Skills:

Empathy help the client to understand that the case worker is genuine and listening ,Sympathy concern only with well-being for the client but don't help the worker to express deep understanding of clients feelings and thoughts which empathy can bring about.

6.6.4.Neutrality Skills:

It is important not to be judgmental of the client's circumstances by keeping an open mind without imposing the case worker's own religious, political, and personal views on the clients. Regardless of the type of client or population the worker work with it is important to trust the social work code of ethics to guide the workers judgment. This skill will be honed in due time with emphasis on the fact that the case worker must also learn to adequately address own value system and the case worker should be in touch with own bias before he can find their middle ground and truly meet the client where they are.

6.6.5.Rapport Building Skills:

Being able to build a trusting relationship with the clients is an art. There can be many variables that can diminish a client's acceptance of new person in their life. When the case worker able to support their clients,then have to help them identify other support systems, accurately assess their needs, empathize with their unique situation in a non-

judgmental and value neutral way, then the worker can begin to build a strong therapeutic relationship with his/her client.

6.7 COMMUNICATION PROCESS IN PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP

Communication is the process of sharing thoughts, ideas, experiences and emotions with each other and having those thoughts, ideas, expriences and emotions understood. In other words, it is a process by which we assign and convey meaning in an attempt to create shared understanding.

6.7.1 EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Meaning and Characteristics

A working definition for effective communication is to share meaning and understanding between the persons ending the message and the person receiving the message. The key element here is "understanding", that is to say, effective communication leads to understanding. Effective communication, therefore,implies that the message:

Is understood -received message is the same one as the sent message (effective communication may be understood to have occurred when the intended meaning of the sender and meaning by the receiver are the same).

Achieves its intended effect, in terms of reaction, response or behavior- Identification is one of the key ingredient of effective communication. In fact, unless one's listeners can identify with what one is saying and with the way one is saying it, they are not likely to receive and understand his message. The effectiveness of communication is subjective by nature and require a mutuality of experiences to be understood by the receiver as intended by the sender.

The main problem in the interaction of social worker and their clients is about communication. To make the diagnosis of client wellness, social workers face a challenge to communicate professionally with their clients both verbally and non-verbally. The analysis result showed that verbal and non-verbal communication simultaneously improved the client participation

level. It is suggested that social worker improved their competences both verbal and non-verbal communication through suitable training.

6.7.2 What is Non-verbal Communication?



Nonverbal communication refers to transmitting information without using words or language. Examples of non-verbal communication include facial expressions, body posture, eye contact, how close we stand next to each other, and touch.

Non-verbal communication refers to transmitting information without using words or language. Examples of non-verbal communication include facial expressions, body posture, eye contact, how close we stand next to each other, and touch. Emotions and attitudes are primarily conveyed using non-verbal communication. It is estimated that between 60 and 65 percent of what we communicate is done so using non-verbal communication.

6.7.3 What is Verbal Communication?

Verbal communication refers to transmitting information using words or sounds. Verbal communication is primarily used to show our thoughts and describe how we feel.There are several verbal skills that a counselor can use in a counseling session that can improve communication and contribute to improved outcomes for the client. Questioning is a verbal communication skill that can be used to gather more detailed information and get the clients to explore issues that led them to come to therapy. Confrontation is a verbal communication skill that involves challenging or 'confronting' the client over what the counselor perceives as a discrepancy. Focusing is when the counselor guides the conversation toward a particular area that the counselor feels is important.

From the perspective of social workers, communication skill both verbal and non-verbal is important means to establish better communication between social workers with client. It implied that social workers must have competencies which improved through the social worker politeness polite and friendly must be institutionalized as the standard attitudes or behavior and not being ignorant or indifferent in providing services. Facial expressions and tone of voice when providing services are the characteristics of professional social worker which must be nurtured and developed further.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: What are supportive skills in case work relationship?

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Q 3: What is non-verbal communication?

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6.8 LET US SUM UP

- Social case work is a way of helping people who have psycho-social problem. To help the client effectively, the case worker needs adequate knowledge of human behaviour and of community resources. The relationship is the soul of case work.

  The relationship between case worker and the client has therapeutic element. It is called professional relationship, where role is not mutual but only helper and helped relationship.
- As an art, a caseworker needs to skillful in developing intimate yet purposeful relationship with the client .With the help of the tools of rapport building , client assessment ,supportive , empathy instead of sympathy and neutrality.
- The seven principles of the relationship i.e., individualization, purposeful expression of the feelings, acceptance, confidentiality, controlled emotional involvement, non-judgmental attitude and client self-detemination are founded upon one of the intensified basic needs.
- An effective communication with the verbal and non-verbal processes play important role in case worker and client relationship in social case work.