

Example of research paper on social work

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Is Social Work Just Common Sense? Name: Institutional Affiliation:

Often the unsung heroes of society, social workers are not often considered to be the top of professionalism. From the outside, it looks like a job that anybody off the streets can apply. Social work revolves around helping people; with common sense as your guide surely you will be able to complete all of your tasks correctly! This is an incorrect assumption, however. It takes many people by surprise to find out that social workers may need a BA or even an MA in order to compete for a job in social work. In fact, many did not know you needed a degree at all. Though there is truth to the fact that helping our fellow human beings does possess an element of common sense, there are still many things that social workers need to learn before they can hope to help anybody in a professional sense. There are state and federal laws to abide by, privacy terms to memorize, and counseling concepts to adapt to. While it is true that a common sense does have its place in social work, as well as helping others, social work has much more to it; social workers need an education in which to build their career as well as their ability to help others.

Common sense can sometimes be a subjective concept; there is not always a shared understanding, as people may like to think. The primary mission of a social worker is to better the lives of the people in their communities, reach out to those in need, and help people who cannot help themselves. These acts sound like common sense to most and can make the idea of getting an education seem superfluous. If someone is in trouble, help them. The idea does not require a degree. If an alcoholic is abusing his wife, reach out to her

and help her remove herself from the situation. Make her feel supported and guide her as she makes difficult decisions. If a homeless man wants to turn his life around, show him where he can find shelter, food, and the possibility of work while he gets back up on his feet. These are not typically the acts of an educated person, but a kind person. Allen Rubin and Earl Babbie, authors of “ Brooks/Cole Empowerment Series: Research Methods for Social Work” suspect this is why most people do not realize that social work requires more than common sense (2013). The assumption is made that social work is about being kind, and, Rubin argues; a fair amount of it is. However, that’s not all there is to the profession. Though one would think, it is common sense to remove a woman from an alcoholic partner and offer her counsel people fail to realize, it is illegal to offer her counsel without an education (2013). Many times when it comes to helping those who are suffering or in need there are procedures that need to be followed. If every social worker began making calls that they thought were right there would be a system breakdown because, as previously mentioned, common sense is often subjective. Though the act of helping is universal, how to help is where people often miscommunication, as outlined in Frederic A. Reamer’s book, “ Social Work Values and Ethics” (2013). Reamer states that even though common sense is essential it is not all that there is. Rules and procedures are in place so that an order may be established. Without a recognized order to follow, each social worker would begin doing what he or she thought was right. While each employee would undoubtedly have the best of intentions, some actions may begin to infringe on citizen’s rights to certain freedoms or privacy (2013). If the social worker is educated on regulated procedures it

helps avoid these discrepancies and while individuals still may not be happy with the service, the social worker can be sure that it is the state and federally mandated care that they are offering.

With these facts in mind it is easy to see that though common sense can be a focal point of social work, it takes a high amount of professionalism.

Though they may be required to find alternative ways to help individuals, they are still required to follow rules and regulations set up by their state and federal consensus. Anybody without education concerning social work would not be aware that this all requires professionalism of the utmost authority. Social workers must follow rules, learn procedures, adhere to privacy policies, and abide by specific state laws, showing that the occupation of a social worker contains the customary foundation of any other professional occupation. Andreas Liljegren's article, " Pragmatic Professionalism: Micro-Level Discourse in Social Work", published in European Journal of Social Work summarizes practical applications for professionalism in social work that can concern confidentiality, privacy, and allowing the client to choose their own course of action (2012). In Liljegren's article, professionalism seems to come in many forms but is apparently most effective when the social worker relinquishes authority and simply offers options to the client, allowing them to choose what will happen next. When this happens, the social worker is nothing more than a conduit for help and change (2012). To many, this will appear to be the opposite of common sense. It is subjective, as previously stated, but many would agree that if common sense were applied the social worker would take charge; in these circumstances they must know better. However, Liljegren's research shows

promising things for allowing clients to choose their own methods of help. This proves that sometimes social work works against the widely accepted concept of common sense (2012).

Another topic of interest that many people do not consider is the base of knowledge required to become a social worker. The education required is surprisingly extensive. This is because social workers are considered to be the hub in a constantly rotating wheel of individuals who require help; because of this they need information and knowledge on a variety of subjects. David A. Hardcastle reveals in his book “ Theories and Skills for Social Workers” that social workers seeking employment in communities that have populations of 15, 000 or higher can find placement in nearly 250 positions concerning almost 50 areas of expertise (2011). Classes to become a social worker are very diverse and cover a wide range of subjects. Social workers learn about everything from adoption policies, foreign and at home, to how to counsel and individual overcoming addiction. Social workers also learn about resources that may be offered within their community, as well as how to jumpstart resources that are needed (2013). This information, plus much more, is combined with ways that allow a social worker to help the client transition from a difficult period in their life to a better one. Without this knowledge, the social worker would be ill-equipped. They also learn how to better the community as a whole. Social workers learn skills in human resources and interpersonal communication, as well as intervention and confidentiality. As pillars of help in the community, social workers must be able to connect with those in need on a personal level while remaining professional. This is not an easy line to walk; learning to do so takes

education and practice (2013). Many social workers also strive for professional connections among other social workers. This bond can help service future members of the community who may eventually be in need. Many agencies eventually reach their capacity to take on new clients. If a social worker is connected with professionals at another agency they can help guide potential clients that they are unable to other agencies that can provide assistance (2013).

In my opinion, the knowledge that social workers acquire through their education is essential to their jobs. Common sense is needed, but it is not sufficient enough on its own to allow a social worker to complete tasks. Because social work is such a diverse occupation, education is a cornerstone that is necessary for members of the community, as well as communities themselves to be serviced in a way that meets the various needs of each unique situation. While some may expect a social worker to handle any situation based on common sense alone, this is impossible and could lead to trouble. Due to so many laws involving privacy, confidentiality, state mandates, and federal instigations, social workers must be better prepared; there could be bureaucratic red tape that common sense does not apply to . With no real experience, it is easy for most citizens to assume that being a social worker is easy. Saving individuals from addiction is as simple as telling them to stop, and keeping children safe is as unsophisticated of a process as asking the parents not to abuse them anymore. This is not so, and there is much more that goes into situations that social workers are involved with. How is it that all of this knowledge became a part of social work? The answer is relatively simple. As social work evolved from a simple act of volunteering

to a civic duty, to a professional occupation, its standards evolved. Over the years policies regarding privacy and client confidentiality were put in place to protect the client's reputation, according to Eileen Gambrill's book, "Social Work Practice: A Critical Thinker's Guide (2012)." The book outlines the evolution of social work from the 20's to today, detailing the rise of confidentiality, and the expansion of social worker's duties, as well as their education process and how to handle many unconventional situations. Gambril suggests that all social workers be critical thinkers who are able to think quickly on their feet. She also suggests that they be kind and maintain a strong heart while still possessing a desire to learn, citing that one needs to always educate oneself in order to educate others (2012). Jane F. Gilgun's "The Four Cornerstones of Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work", also gives a detailed account of how procedures to check the legitimacy of client's claims was put in place after individuals began using the social work system as a weapon (2005). As social work grew, the knowledge of the social worker began to expand. It will continue to do so if the profession continues to evolve.

In conclusion, common sense is very important for social work. However, it is not the most important part of social work. It is also almost insulting to say that there is nothing to social work other than common sense. Many people work very hard, educating themselves for years on a variety of subjects so that they may help better the people in their community. They use common sense, but they use their education and their knowledge more than anything else. They deserve commendation for the hard work and dedication that they show their communities. Doing so in and of itself is simply common sense.

References

Gambrill, E. (2012). *Social Work Practice: A Critical Thinker's Guide*. Oxford : Oxford University Press.

Gilgun, J. F. (2005). The Four Cornerstones of Evidence-Based Practice in Social Work. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 52-61.

Hardcastle, D. A. (2011). *Theories and Skills for Social Workers*. Oxford : Oxford University Press.

Liljegrán, A. (2012). Pragmatic Professionalism: Micro-level Discourse in Social Work. *European Journal of Social Work*, 295-312.

Northern, H., & Kurland, R. (2013). *Social Work With Groups*. Columbia: Columbia University Press.

Reamer, F. A. (2013). *Social Work Values and Ethics*. Columbia: Columbia University Press.

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2013). *Brooks/Cole Empowerment Series: Research Methods for Social Work*. Cengage Learning.

Saleebey, D. (2012). *The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice*. Pearson.