

Example of essay on social work reflective paper

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



During my work placement at the Spastic Centre of South Australia (SCOSA) I have learned a significant number of things concerned with the practice of social work. The experience of this placement has been invaluable and has taught me the importance of theoretical and practical approaches to the job, including models and frameworks. During the course of this essay, I will reflect on what I have learned and how I came to understand the importance of the above things.

It became clear very quickly that all workers at the centre rely heavily on the theoretical approaches to social work. They all demonstrate a broad range of multi-skilled practice approaches, and I have come to realise the importance of knowing the trade in order to meet the needs of every, individual client.

The Centre provided a number of different services too: active support, a programme for the school holidays, day options, a client development team, and client services. The reason for this is because social work focuses on people as individuals, recognising that each client is an individual and has their own needs. Different roles are required in order to achieve the various social work roles needed to assist the clients with their various problems.

However, my placement focused on work within client services and the client development team which meant that I have focused my practical experience on a background in human services.

The client development team is a collection of social workers who focus on work which helps to enable clients to become independent and able to function without the assistance of social care. This included the work of individualised behavioural plans with program support, and intervention services designed to maximise personal growth and the development of the

individual. The main aim of this team is to enable clients to be functioning individuals who are not reliant upon the support of social care and/or any other social organisation. Another aspect of their job is to negotiate and act as a go-between for clients and the various organisations which fund and support them in their day to day lives. For example: working to assist the client in maintaining and gaining financial support from external agencies whilst helping them to negotiate contracts which are often complicated and involve complex special arrangements. This can be extremely daunting for a client, particularly for the type of person who is in need of social care. It became clear to me, during this time, that patience is also extremely important for the social worker as the client is often in need of a great deal of practical support, such as during these negotiations, and are not always completely prepared to enter into these discussions. The client development team is also fundamentally in charge of a broad spectrum of other areas too: innovation and project management, maintaining professional and technical knowledge, research, the recommendation and implementation of innovative models of services, technology, learning and support programs, resources, and also the management of special projects from time to time. In short, their work is extremely varied and makes for an interesting and invigorating work day. They are focused entirely on the development of the client through education and services, whilst also keeping their own development rolling through the on-going time invested in their own professional practices, keeping up to day with the latest innovations and ideas. The central approach which I witnessed SCOSA workers adopting was a generalist one, which allowed for them to all be flexible and individualised for

each client. Individuals, families and communities all require a degree of freedom and flexibility when being approached by social workers, for obvious reasons. As already discussed, this meant that workers were able to adopt a range of theoretical approaches to endeavour to best meet the needs of their individual clients. The SCOSA approach is a holistic one which enables them to view the client as a whole person. Often, the clients have experienced a range of hugely debilitating disadvantages and, as such, it is crucial that the worker is able to meet their needs, rather than taking a 'one size fits all' policy.

I was also party to a number of experiences when dealing with crisis intervention: SCOSA provides these services to individuals who have experienced a personal loss or tragedy. I witnessed the team using a strength perspective when handling these types of situations: this means that their approach is an empowering one which is led by the client. The effect of this was obvious; the client was able to grow their own strength whilst being nurtured in a supportive environment. This approach does not attempt to belittle the experiences or problems of the client but, rather, it focuses on positives and strengths in a situation which allows for the client to grow out of their experiences, rather than being suffocated by focusing on the negatives they have experienced. I have witnessed countless examples of how this and other approaches have proven successful which is especially impressive when considering the lack of time and resources which people often have. This approach recognises how individuals have coped in spite of pain and suffering in their life and it encourages the client to recognise their own strength through the realisation of this. SCOSA workers repeatedly

demonstrated their understanding that to succeed with a client the services must play to their strengths, aspirations, and perceptions. This knowledge is often acquired through three methods: theoretical knowledge, factual knowledge, and practical or personal knowledge.

In short, a SCOSA worker must be a people person. Within the organisation, SCOSA workers have a wide spectrum of personal experiences which enable them to empathise with, understand and support their clients. However, this is reinforced by on-going empirical research which is conducted through local, state and federal reports. This research asks pertinent questions whilst also addressing problems and solutions. Other techniques of knowledge acquisition I've been witness to are observation, reflection, practice wisdom, and tacit knowledge. Combined, they enable SCOSA workers to meet the needs of their clientele. Observation is used constantly, throughout any approach taken to a client and this are then taken back to the team.

Reflection is used via debriefs following sessions with a client, through team supervision, and the deconstruction of events and behaviours. Practice wisdom and tacit knowledge often become intertwined due to the natural building of understanding which a social worker will gain for their client, leading to the innate understanding of non-verbal behaviours, for example, and so on.

Whilst working at SCOSA, the AASW code of ethics has become imperative to my practice and I have become innately aware of the importance of social work and the responsibility which I will need to shoulder. I have found that my ability to reflect on my practice and the progress of my clients has begun to develop and I feel it will continue to grow with practice. An important

lesson I have learned is that the sentiment I place on the importance of becoming a respected social worker is unimportant and I recognise that, regardless of experience, it is crucial to continue learning and growing within the profession at all times, as I have experienced at SCOSA throughout my placement. I feel that I have grown exponentially in and outside of my placement and feel that my skills as a social worker have grown with me. An important aspect of my learning, whilst training at SCOSA, has been the vital importance of how lots of people with lots of different roles must work together to meet the needs of the clients. SCOSA has twelve hubs and each of these brings a different field of expertise to the table. I have learnt that understanding the client is the first step towards meeting their needs and being sensitive to the issues they face such as shame or embarrassment of their disability, for example. I have realised that my listening skills are as crucial as my communication skills and I have developed these so that I hope my clients feel as though I am genuinely interested in them as a person, rather than as just another client. The nature of working with disabled people requires patience and energy; the utilisation of things such as the ten second rule when filling out forms, for example. Respect, genuineness, and individual integrity are what is required to make a strong social worker.