

Human behavior and the social environment essay sample

[Psychology](#), [Behaviorism](#)



The general concept of Social Work is defined by human behavior and the environment. These two components are the tools that give meaning to the profession and narrate its functions in the broadest terms. Behavior is a characteristic of living things which is often identified with life itself. Modern day Social Work practice dates back to several social movements of the 19th century and beyond and to two very prominent perspectives on the origin of human problems: those aspects that viewed the ' person' as the central point for change and those that saw the problems in the environment as contributors to human problems. Human behavior is complex and the Social Work profession is broad, which is evident by supporting theories as presented by experts on Human Behavior. These theories support human growth and development as well as the overall functioning of the individual in the midst of social service delivery. Almost all these theories come out of a socio-historical context and are value-laden.

After birth a child quickly realizes that resources for his survival come from the parents or guardians and he discovers through contact with these people the strategies for safeguard of the resources. The differences between children in one family could be as great as the differences between children chosen at random from other families. Normally in a family setting, siblings compete for available resources provided by the parents/guardians. As such strategies are adopted by the children for survival and such strategies could be the origin of motives. Eldest children normally assume the dominant role in a family setting through acting as surrogate parents towards younger siblings. Middle children normally have broader interests, have lower self-esteem and are sometimes more independent.

However these also face competition in a family setting from older siblings, who are stronger and more articulate. The youngest siblings are more or less not as ambitious as both the middle and older siblings. In some families, lastborns often enjoy considerable parental attention and great support from older siblings although such support is sometimes fraught with ambivalence. Of course we cannot discuss the concept of human behavior in its entirety without mentioning evolution. This may sound absurd to most people, especially those who may not want to acknowledge that not only our bodies, but also our minds and behavior reflect an evolutionary heritage.

Charles Darwin was one of the world's first psychologists whose influence was felt by most of the pioneering psychologists of the 20th century. In his writings, he mentioned that mental abilities and emotions that we think of as distinctly human, such as love, loyalty, language, intelligence and even aesthetics are found in other species. He also noted that human behavior has its evolutionary roots in the behavior of other species, comparing the similarity in our facial expressions and postures to that of other non-human primates, especially the great apes. Another psychologist, Murray Bowen, presented a theory in the late 1940's and early 1950's referred to as the Bowen family systems theory. In this theory, Bowen alluded to Darwin's perception on human behavior as earlier stated in his books. According to Bowen, human beings are a product of evolution and human behavior is controlled by the same processes that control the behavior of all other living things. His theories also viewed man as a part of life rather than as a

separate unit. Next in line of the determinants of human behavior is the society in which we live as individuals.

The society, without doubt, has a great deal of influence in forming our characters and helping us become who we really are in the world. The influence of the society is often perceived in a variety of forms and shapes and most of this is sometimes unconsciously utilized by individual. Research has revealed that contemporary society has a huge impact in shaping the life and other attributes of an individual. Some of these changes are identified in accents, simple and daily habits and even food. “ It is even a widely held belief that society can shape or design the life of a child to be a very good and productive individual in the community, whilst on the other hand it can also do the reverse by turning the child into a monster and a very terrible and dangerous individual in the society/community. Whatever the circumstances, society plays a very important role in the all-round development of an individual, be it in a positive or negative way”, I. Carter, (2011).

Lastly in our determinants of human behavior we will consider the concept of creativity or innovation. “ This is simply the change factor that arises as a result of imagination. Behavior based on imagination and creativity are the easiest and the most simple to change. “ As human beings we have the innate potential to imagine something in a very creative manner that we can utilize to bring a significant change and modification into our lives”, Elizabeth Hutchison (2007). The learning process and its contribution to behavior are very fundamental to both biological and social development of the individual.

The structure of the human brain supports learning processes. Due to exposure to stimulus in the environment, changes occur that have an impact on the brain as well as determine specific behavior in response to the specific stimulus.

This process is called memory and it describes the action of the brain in interpreting and transforming various data received to be stored in the brain. Such transformed information is later utilized as the need arises. Bodily functions that have to do with memory have many features. Stimuli receptions are interpreted through Sensations and Perceptions by the human body and these are responded to selectively by the individual based on the manner and nature of the reception. Behavior is modified with the reception of stimuli thereby altering perception. These activities have a profound effect on the results of learning experiences and they contribute to the eventual behavioral response that is the end result. Behavioral conditioning is the eventual result of the acquired learning process which is used in determining the information received by the brain that is in turn utilized to bring about the desired response. Apparently there are two types of behavioral conditioning – Classical and Instrumental conditioning.

Classical Conditioning is the systematic response produced by a neutral stimulus that is always connected to the acquisition of a reward or the avoidance of punishment and negative behavior. The occurrence of a stimulus is confirmation that Operant or Instrumental conditioning is active. Behavior that earns reward has the tendency to continue, whilst the behavior

that results in punishment has the tendency to be discontinued or stopped immediately. Some behavior is reinforced when certain conditions exist:

- a). When the behavior and the stimulus occur simultaneously.
- b). Response is enhanced due to a repetition of the association.
- c). When the result of the behavior elicits pleasure or reduces pain.
- d). Without interference that could lead to a cancellation or weakening of the response.

Rewards and punishments determine the eventual behavior in individuals through brain activity. The limbic system is the area of the brain that reacts to pain and pleasure. Social behavior is acquired through conditioning and these are rooted in the biological and genetic principles that are in line with ability of the individual in responding to stimuli in the environment.

Other essential human behavior that occur by instinct like eating, reproduction and defensive behavior complement our survival and these are well structured and regulated with the passing of time to suit every individual. Constant changes affect the brain for it to be able to adapt to our environment thereby supporting our survival capabilities. We can therefore justly say that human beings behave in a specific way as a result of the biological and social conditions that present itself at the particular moment in time. However most behaviors have the tendency of adaptive significance, meaning that individuals have the tendency to adapt to the environment, making it possible for studies to be conducted in an evolutionary context.

An example of such behavior is aggression, which is also associated with extreme abnormal environmental conditions. It is also very fair to say that the physical and social context within which people conduct themselves usually put a limit on their choices and eventual actions. The resources around us in the environment have very significant implications on our lives in a variety of ways. Consequently changes in our access to physical resources will normally cause a corresponding challenge for us to get adapted to our present social environment as a response. Human actions and behavior are very much determined by the environment. Human beings are controlled by circumstances in the environment and not all behavior or action that occurs or takes place is out of a free will by the individual. Decisions have the tendency to be influenced by the environment and other factors in the environment.

Human behavior and genetics are also very closely linked together and there are multiple ways in which researchers can study the contribution that genetic factors make to human behavior. This type of research work is known as quantitative genetics because it has as its aim the issue of determining how the level of variation in a trait can be affected by genetic factors in a population. Statistical methods and numerators are used to draw comparison between groups of people and not focusing on particular genes that cause trait variation in characteristics or between individuals. Some researches however have been carried out in trying to identify and get an in depth knowledge about genes that have relevance to aggression. But the question that stands out is, how could our genes cause us to act in a

particular way? It is sometimes difficult and very sensitive to establish which genes bring about trait and how it happens because of a number of reasons

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- a). There are more than one genetic factor that usually leads to a particular trait.
- b). Both genetic factors and non-genetic factors (environmental) may contribute to a trait.
- c). Different genetic factors may have different effects after interaction, depends on which factors are present in the individual's genotype.
- d). Environmental factors may also interact with each other.
- e). Environmental factors may affect which genetic factors have an effect and vice versa.
- f). A protein function can be altered after produced from a gene and modified.
- g). The genes in our bodies may be turned on and off since they do not have a continuous effect, both during our overall development and within the life time of an individual cell. As a result it is always correct to say that a particular genetic variant is part of the cause of multiple traits but not a sufficient condition for the trait to be exhibited.

The complex nature of human behavior and the problems associated with understanding the involvement of genes is huge in the human behavioral

process . It is obvious that genes have an indirect effect on behavior. Nonetheless some critics have suggested that any attempt to understand the process by which genes influence behavior will definitely fail, which most researchers consider a wrong concept. Genes have the potential to determine the proteins that are made but do not determine the behavior or the personality of individuals. The behavior of genes, the proteins they manufacture and the way they behave within the body and the brain are all ways to explain the behavior of individuals, leading us to the conclusion that human behavior is influenced both by genes that we inherit and the environment we find ourselves.

Social scientists have pointed out that changes have taken place over the many years of research in human behavior in which both genetic and environmental factors have played very significant roles and provided the basis of explanations to the various theories on human behavior. This analysis now relates to a combination of other issues in different disciplines in both mental health and illness and a number of other concepts. Antisocial behavior is a vital component in the change process and there is evidence to support the fact that both genetics and the environment are huge factors that have significant impact on this concept and they are useful factors in determining and explaining individual differences in antisocial behavior. Different researches performed by different psychologists have produced different results on this concept. The study of the behavior of twins and adopted children has shown that heredity plays an important role in

antisocial behavior as well as addressing various forms of aggression and other related behavior.

Various segments of antisocial behavior, including personality factors such as risk-taking, callous-unemotional traits and impulsivity traits, are known to be genetically influenced, as presented by O. Dale, R. Smith and others, (2008). If it is possible to identify which genes influence behavior, then it may be possible to modify people's behavior by developing a series of approaches or treatment which include -:

- 1). Genetic Intervention - or gene therapy - the replacement or repair of a gene or simply the inclusion of a working gene alongside a faulty one, could be used to change behavior.
- 2). Medical Intervention - medicines can be used to change behavior, for example, anti-depressant drugs or drugs to minimize shyness or promote memory.
- 3). Environmental Intervention - the use of social strategy such as changes in diet, education or parental care.

However there is no scale to determine which of these measures is most effective in changing behavior and each case should be tried separately. An issue of grave concern is that research in behavioral genetics might worsen the trend towards 'medicalization', where the behavior that was previously thought to be normal is now viewed as a disorder. This could eventually lead to people being put under unnecessary social pressure to use medical interventions, when in fact it is not always necessary. In addition it is important to note that genetic or medical interventions are only adopted after adequate consideration has been given to environmental approaches.

BEHAVIORISM: The discussion on human behavior will be very much incomplete without the mention and ultimate discussion of BEHAVIORISM. This concept exemplifies the belief that behaviors can be measured, trained and possibly changed. A major proponent of this theory was John. B. Watson, 1913, and his school of psychology with the publication of his ground breaking paper, Psychology as the behaviorist views. The term behaviorism describes the process of learning that clearly explains that, behavior is acquired through conditioning which takes place as a result of interaction with the environment. A common and unanimous belief held by behaviorists is that our responses to environmental stimuli shape our behaviors. They also believe that behavior can be studied in a systematic and noticeable manner without consideration of internal mental states. In discussing conditioning there are always two theories that present themselves - : 1). Classical Conditioning and 2). Operant Conditioning.

Classical Conditioning. This is a concept which explains that behavior is a learning process which takes place as a result of an association between an environmental stimulus and a natural stimulus. This learning theory was first introduced by the Russian psychologist Ivan Pavlov. " Pavlov obtained his explanations for behavior through an experiment he performed with dogs. The experiments involved a neutral signal and a reflex action that occurred naturally. In Pavlov's universally acclaimed experiment, the neutral signal that was used to attract the attention of the dogs was the sound of a tone and this prompted the salivation of the dogs as the reflex action that followed in response to the food that was presented", Ashford, Jose, B and

Lecroy, Craig, W. (2008). By associating the sound of the tone with the food, the dogs could automatically salivate just by the mere sound of the tone as this was always associated with an expected outcome, which was the presentation of food. However classical conditioning occurs rather differently in the real world, quite unlike the type of behavior exhibited by Pavlov's dogs. Classical conditioning has been applied differently and in different situations. Some examples of such applications apply to schools that have made use of the concept, building more confidence in the pupils during the learning process. This will help the students to feel more confident and relaxed instead of being the opposite. Classical conditioning can be used to determine the amount of behavior that takes place, whether to increase or decrease the behavior.

Operant Conditioning - This is a learning process that affects behavior through rewards and punishments and it is also known as Instrumental Conditioning. A special feature of this learning process is the behavior and what it produces at the end of the process. Unlike classical conditioning, this form of learning process concentrates on the modification of voluntary behavior and it is linked to the environment and controlled by rewards and punishments. It is the rewards and punishments that would determine the final outcome of behavior of the organism. B. F Skinner is always referred to as the father of Operant Conditioning, but a great deal of his work was linked to Thorndike's law of effect, known as Reinforcement, which is the determinant of the behavior. Skinner identified three different responses or operant that takes place after behavior:

- a). Neutral Operant - Like the name implies, these are responses that do not determine an increase or decrease of the possibility of a repeat in behavior.
- b). Reinforcers - These can either be positive or negative and they accelerate the responses from the surrounding that determine the possibility of a behavior being repeated.
- c). Punishers: this is the negative response from the environment that decreases the likelihood of a behavior being repeated. Punishment is meted out to reduce behavior.

Through his experiments with rats, Skinner showed how positive reinforcement worked with hungry rats in the popular Skinner box. This box had a lever on the side with some hungry rats placed inside the box. The motive of the experiment was to have the rats to knock off the lever that was attached to the box. This action by the rats would make some food pellets to drop inside the box. After a series of repetition of the behavior wherein the rats repeatedly knocked off the lever and received food pellets in compensation for their behavior, they became very aware it was necessary to go straight to the lever each time they were placed in the box. The reward of receiving food if they pressed the lever prompted the rats to repeat the action a couple of times each time they were placed in the box. This type of reinforcement is known as POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT and it can strengthen behavior because of the reward that follows the behavior. Skinner was able, through his theory, to convince other psychologists that

positive reinforcement strengthens behavior by providing a result an individual considers rewarding

On the other hand, negative reinforcement strengthens behavior as a result of the removal of an unpleasant reinforcer. Skinner even went further to explain how negative reinforcement works with an experiment involving rats for a second time. The rats were placed in a box and were subjected to an unpleasant electric current that caused them discomfort. But when the rats moved around, they would knock off a lever on the side of the box. This will immediately switch off the electric current in the box. As a result the rats then learned to go straight to the lever when placed in the box so as to stop the electric current. According to Skinner, the major influence of our behavior is learning from our environment. This is evident by the reaction of the rats in the box when food was placed inside it. The rats learned to repeat the behavior in order to get the desired reward. The theories and concepts on behavior and learning discussed in the previous paragraphs eventually lead us to six fundamental principles that guide behavior in behavioral management:

1). Behavior is changed as a result of negative consequences, but this does not change attitudes. This is demonstrated by children in a school situation who face negative consequences such as restriction of privileges, physical punishment and other forms of negative consequences by showing a very temporal behavioral change. These can very likely lead to negative attitudes unless it is used in combination with positive reinforcement strategies to avoid an increase in misbehavior. 2). Positive reinforcement strategies

support long-term attitudinal change. This fact is evident when children grow older and reach adulthood. However during this time, positive behavior is not always present due to the threat of negative consequences; it is nevertheless present in due course because of the individual's commitment, which determines right and wrong behavior.

The children show proper behavior out of self will and not because of threat from another source, 3). The frequency and intensity of misbehavior is increased through negative consequences rather than improving the behavior. This is more noticeable in impulsive children who do not consider consequence before the initiation of behavior. Irrespective of the extent of the negative consequence, behavior is unchanged unless previously considered. In such children the consideration of the consequence comes only after the behavior. If punished for behavior outside their control, they become helpless and respond with anger and eventual depression. 4). The use of appropriate positive systems can bring about cognitive control of behavior. Cognitive strategies that are well laid out can lead to major behavioral control even in impulsive and behaviorally difficult children. These strategies occurred in various forms and mostly in the form of time outs followed by discussions of the reason for the inappropriate behavior as well as suggestions for better alternatives to replace the bad behavior.

Sometimes the alternative positive behavior must be practiced and positively reinforced. 5). The child should be able to observe every improvement in behavior through positive reinforcement systems being incremental. If the expectations of positive reinforcement systems are set

too high, the child may have difficulties to earn rewards and may cause discouragement and a negative effect. On the other hand the systems should not be very low and allows all the children to receive the same reward. This might be less rewarding for a child that makes significant progress thereby causing discouragement to such a child. There should be incremental rewards to distinguish between mild to intense reinforcement. By this way the child will be able to see tangible levels of progress. 6). There must always be an adult authority to reinforce behavior. Most children require commands or guidance in order to fulfill adult expectations. This action from the adult complements the child's effort in the attempt to exhibit expected behavior and it is not about providing positive reinforcement after many reminders.

Reflexes irrespective of being conditioned or not are always more directed towards the internal physiology of the organism. This is due to the fact that we are often more interested in behavior which has an impact on the surrounding world. The results of the behavior may come back as feedback to the organism or the individual and this will eventually change the likelihood that the behavior will reoccur. The most serious and compelling attempts to study changes brought about by the consequences of behavior was done by E. L. Thorndike in 1898. Thorndike is famous because of his experiments with a hungry cat that was put in a box with pieces of food placed outside the box to see if it can escape by unlatching a door. During this experiment, the cat tried many different kinds of behavior some eventually leading to the possibility of the cat being able to open the door,

an action called chance success. With a series of repetitions of this experiment, it was evident that the cat could easily open the door without much effort. Thorndike described this behavior of the cat as stamped in behavior. According to him, behavior is stamped in when it is followed by certain consequences.

Thorndike called this, the law of effect, which was simply a rule to enhance behavior. He also noted that certain behavior was more likely to readily occur in comparison to other behaviors of similar nature or situation. Because of the successive delays by the cat to get out of the box, Thorndike constructed a learning curve. This was an attempt intended to show a quantitative process in behavior, almost like in physics and biology and this received a huge global attention. The curve also shows a process that took place over a certain period of time. Thorndike's discovery was a huge step forward in measuring behavior and has since then become the basis in learning in psychology texts. However the learning curves do not describe the process of stamping in. According to him, the time that was used up by cat to escape from the box involved the cancellation of other behavior and the curve explained the number of different things a cat might do when placed in a box. Learning curves illustrate how different kinds of behavior evoked in very complex situations are handled and recorded.

In addition to the 'law of effect', Thorndike came up with two other laws - The law of Readiness and The law of Exercise. The former, the law of readiness, explores the learner's readiness for action. This is determined by

the extent to which the learner is prepared before the action. This is further summarized into two categories:

- 1). when someone is ready to perform an act that brings satisfaction and
- 2). when someone is ready to perform an act that causes annoyance, due to interference with goal-directed behavior. Thorndike even went further to include other subsidiary laws in his theory like -:

a). law of Multiple Responses : This takes place when a particular response fails to yield the desired result. This leads to a succession of responses until success results and learning become enhanced.

b). The law of Set: This generally describes the overall attitude or readiness of the individual and how these affect learning.

c). The law of Response Analogy : This law refers to an individual's response to new situation as influenced by innate tendencies and elements as in previous situations to which responses were successfully acquired in the past.

d). The law of Selectivity of Response: This law describes the ability of the animal or an individual to learn and to be able to ignore certain aspects of processes that are irrelevant, whilst responding to the more rewarding ones.

e). The law of Association Shifting: This occurs when responses from previous stimuli are eventually transferred to other responses of other stimuli.

f). The law of Spread Effect: An action or response that produces pleasure has the tendency to be transferred to other acts, stimulus and actions that took place at the same time.

According to Thorndike, rewards play a very crucial role in learning. It enhances the occurrence of positive behavior in many ways although sometimes it can also bring about negative behavior. In spite of the many good attributes attached to Thorndike's theory, it has over the years been criticized for a few shortcomings associated with the general theory. However it still remains to be seen that the good side of the theory far surpasses the views of the critics.

BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT THEORY

In discussing behavior in Social Work, it is but fair to make mention of Behavioral Management Theories and how much they impact the profession of Social Work. The Behavioral Management Theory also referred to as the human relations movement due to its effect on the human dimension of work, promotes a better understanding of human behavior at work. An example of such behavior like conflict, motivation group dynamics and expectations can improve productivity or better still yield favorable results. Among some of those Behavioral psychologists are names like Abraham Maslow and others. " This man Abraham Maslow, 1908-1970, propounded one of the most widely accepted need theories - the hierarchy of needs. This was a theory of motivation that was rooted in the consideration of human needs, occurring in a hierarchical order from the least to the highest", Greene, R, R. , Kropf, N, (2009). This theory had three assumptions:

a). Human needs are insatiable.

b). Human behavior has a purpose and a motivation for satisfaction.

c). Needs occurs in a hierarchical structure of importance from the least to the highest. Maslow explained the theory of the needs hierarchy in five areas:

1). Physiological needs. Maslow alluded to all physical needs necessary that supports basic human well-being, such as food, drink etc. into this category. This need automatically becomes a lesser motivator after it is satisfied, according to Maslow.

2). Safety needs. Maslow discussed the importance of basic security, stability, protection and the freedom from fear. These needs are extremely important to the individual and become primary motivation if left unsatisfied.

3). Belonging and love needs. This need involves the individual striving to establish relationships with significant others after physical and safety needs have been satisfied and are no longer motivators.

4). Esteem needs. This comes to play when the individual strives for status, reputation, fame and glory.

5). Self-actualization needs. This finally occurs after all other needs have been satisfied, making the individual indulge in the search to find himself.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory helps Social Workers to visualize client motivation. He also pointed out that a need that is higher in the hierarchy is

always a reason for behavior as long as the need below it has been satisfied. There is always the tendency for unsatisfied lower needs to dominate unsatisfied higher needs. This is also an essential feature in the work of Social Workers as knowing where a person is located on the pyramid of needs facilitates the job process as well as provide help in determining the right motivators. The needs pyramid is very mobile and allows for frequent movement upwards or downwards. No one stays indefinitely in a particular spot. Clients who have their basic needs met become much better and easy to work with from the Social Working perspective, as they are able to concentrate on visions presented to them rather than struggling between options.

INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP FUNCTIONING Social Workers are often confronted with the task of working with a group instead of single individuals. People who are members of these groups and identify with it often behave differently from the single individual. The behavior of individuals in these groups normally depends on the way the group is perceived. " There is always a very substantial and significant effect of group membership on behavior particularly so in situations with an audience and where feedback is provided", I. Carter, (2011). The concept of group dynamics is borne out of the social process wherein individuals interact with one another in a single environment on a daily basis. This includes the influence of personality, power and behavior on the group process. The actions and behavior of members gradually present questions that command the attention of Social Workers. These questions differ from group to group, but there are some

that are very characteristic in nature to all types of groups and these include: -

- a). Is the relationship between group members in line with achieving group goals?
- b). is the structure and size of the group supportive of both the task and maintenance of the group?
- c). which role does informal and formal power play in building consensus or reaching decisions within the group?
- d). is culture influenced due to the combination of individuals?

It is as a result of how these individuals, cultures and other forces interact with the group that the Social worker will be able to understand group effectiveness and plan his approach. Generally there are two types of groups, formal groups and informal groups. 1). Formal Groups - this describes the groups that are well structured and committed to pursue a specific goal for the good of all the members.

2). Informal Groups - these are like random groups who emerge naturally as a result of the organization or member interest. These interests may differ and can range from just a research group having the responsibility to develop to a new product, or a group of workers coming together to improve their activities etc.

An effective group performance is readily achieved to a large extent as a result of the size and composition of the group. By using the word group, we mean from just two people to as much as 500. For a group to be effective and efficient in its effort to achieve the laid out objectives, the size of the group plays a very key role. It is also worth noting that the larger the group, the more is there a likelihood of conflict due to the differences in opinions and views coupled with a reduced opportunity for individual recognition. “ Membership to a group based on diversity, expertise or compatibility is not an assurance for success of the group. In order to achieve goals and objectives, members of the group should equally be committed to the general goals and objectives, as well as the overall task of the group whilst at the same time acclimatizing themselves to the environment”, J. B. Ashford and W. C. Lecroy, (2008).

For any group to be successful there is the need for social-emotional support by some group members, normally provided by other more capable members. The nature of such support can be in the form of the following: 1. Standard setting – a constant reminder of members of the group on the norms, rules and roles of the group. 2. Encouraging – showing appreciation and respect for the contributions of all members towards the development and upkeep of the group. 3. Harmonizing – Finding ways to settle differences and misunderstanding between members of the group, thereby reducing tension within the group. 4. Compromising – members should learn to accept their mistakes and weaknesses and learn to resort to ways of correcting such problems. 5. Share ideas – free communication and idea sharing

opportunities for member of the group. 6. Gate keeping - ensure the flow of communication, facilitate the participation of all group members and discuss procedures for new strategies. No member should feel left behind!

In spite of these positive steps mentioned above, there are some actions by some group members that are generally referred to as self-interest behavior. This is behavior exhibited by some members of the group that strongly contradicts the founding values and principles of the group. Sometimes groups face the threat of disintegration or a very slow pace in accomplishing the objectives of the group if they are not readily addressed. Behaviors that can be identified as self-interest behavior include:

- a). Manipulating - this is the provision by some members of the group of a self-serving information or a single point of view with the intention of achieving results that serve only their interests.
- b). Blocking - this refers to an attempt by members to change issues either way from the point of view of other members to favor their own selfish interests.
- c). Dominating/Controlling - this is the deliberate attempt by some members to other members off, refuse to listen to them and even interpret their suggestions differently.
- d). Splitting hairs - This is the act of deliberately delaying on insignificant issues by some members so as to slow down the progress of the group, with

the intention of undermining the views and intentions of other members of the group.

A very strong concern of Social Workers is the successful management of both the clients as well as groups. It is a matter of priority to always meet the needs of the clients and the groups. As human beings, we possess the ability to behave in a way that is appropriate to meet our needs and the response to this behavior is by way of reflex rather than understanding. Additionally people respond in defense of their needs or from misconceiving the intentions of others. " All human behavior results from the desire to meet the following needs - physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual", C. Zastrow and K. K. Ashman-Kirst, (2006). As a Social Worker there are certain approaches that play an important role in solving behavior problems. These are normally referred to as the five-step Approach to Behavior problems. In order to achieve the goal of these steps, it is necessary that the Social Worker keeps a record of the responses to the five steps by the individuals. The steps in question normally appear in the following order:

- 1). Describe the situation - You must always strive to objectively summarize the behavior and the reasons for the behavior. No conclusions should be made; instead the Social Worker should outline the facts surrounding the situation.
- 2). What is the problem? - Make a description of the action and behavior that poses the problem. This should include everything and everybody that is involved.

3). Whose problem is it? - Try to identify all those that would be affected by the behavior that is deemed as a problem and the extent to which it will affect them.

4). What are the needs? - Attempts should be made by the Social Worker to determine the needs of the individual as well as lay out strategies on how these needs will be met.

5). Solutions - Look at various solutions that could be useful in solving the problem behavior. Try to assess the solutions in respect to meeting the real needs of the group or even the individual client.

Working with groups always poses challenges for the Social Worker as there is always the tendency to encounter behavior problems. Nonetheless there are a few guidelines that could be of immense help to all Social Workers working with either individuals or groups. These guidelines relate to the basic realities of human nature and group behavior. These guidelines include: -

1). Accept all individuals at their different rates of development. Always go to lengths in establishing a cordial relationship. This promotes confidence building and helps you in your job.

2). Work on building trust and respect. Always try to make positive comments and encouragements where possible.

3). All personal feelings and motives of individuals must be recognized and dealt with honestly.

4). Try to be flexible at all times in your attitude in dealing with problems so as to achieve the best results of a problem.

5). Rules should not be against the interest of the group or individuals and make sure everybody understands them and their purpose. Use subtle methods to put across your message and be sure you are always impartial in dealing with members of the group.

6). Desist from making threats you cannot or will not carry out. Threats should always be avoided and learn to act swiftly and decisively.

7). Take your time to explain every point and do not argue or nag.

8). If you can, try to ignore some behavior of the individuals as that can also support achieving results.

9). Learn to show respect to all and treat everybody with equal respect, the same you would want for yourself.

10). Acknowledge your mistakes and learn from them.

Conclusion

As a professional Social Worker working successfully with individuals and groups, an understanding of the needs of both the individuals and groups coupled with other attributes like patience and tolerance is of enormous importance. Like I stated in the previous paragraphs, Social Work takes place in different institutions ranging from schools, medical facilities, family homes, correction facilities, local communities and a lot more other

institutions. The diversity of the institutions that demand the assistance of Social Workers lends credence to the fact that as a Social Worker, you will be meeting different people from different backgrounds.

This diversity in the culture and ethics of the different people encountered during the exercise of duty demands a thorough professionalism and a well-structured and experienced approach from the Social Workers. There are always huge challenges facing Social Workers, but the nature of contact and approach from the workers is always a very strong determinant in solving the problems that may arise during the process of problem solving. A good Social Worker is one that easily identifies a problem behavior and quickly reacts to correct the behavior. The advent of the profession of Social Work has indeed made the world a better place as it is poised to address all social issues faced by individuals, groups and communities. This is evident since the days of Mary Robinson in the 19th century and even before and it continues to today in the modern era. Without Social Workers the world will be a different place, full of chaos and so many untold social problems.

Human Behavior is a very complex concept due to its diverse and complicated nature. It is therefore the responsibility of Social Workers to be able to deal with these diversities in the behavior of the individuals and groups they come into contact with on a daily basis. This responsibility demands training and a very tolerant and subtle approach on the part of the workers in order to achieve their objectives. The role of the environment and the society is very pivotal in determining behavior especially in children; as a result it is very important for social workers to be grounded in the traditions

and norms of the societies and communities they operate. An in-depth understanding of these traditions and norms play a vital role in assisting the Social Workers with their responsibilities. It is always a good thing to put the individuals before the work and not vice versa.

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