

Demanding nature of the job itself social work essay



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Crisis can arise from stressful or traumatic situations due to one or more issues pertaining to serious medical illness, violence, personal loss of loved one, sudden homelessness due to natural disasters, heavy financial debts, rape, broken relationships, and sudden unemployment to name a few. Therefore, (James, 2008) crisis can be defined as an intolerable difficult situation or obstacle in life, when an individual's coping mechanisms fail, further escalating into emotional anguish and disorganization; thus, causing complete immobilization in his/her daily functioning and requiring for immediate crisis intervention or referral. A crisis worker should familiarize himself with the levels of crisis experience, which will serve as a guide in relieving the client's symptoms. Barjon (2008) describes the 'BASICS' model of crisis experience as behavioral, affective, somatic, interpersonal, cognitive and spiritual respectively. Behavioral refers to the precursors and consequences of behavior before and after a crisis, reflected in a client's reactions (E. g. Shock, cries of panic or distress). Affective is the emotional intensity of the client's behavior post crisis (E. g. Anger, fear, anxiety, depression, shame, etc.). Somatic refers to the client's physical symptoms consequential to the crisis, which may present itself as insomnia, headache, cramps, breathlessness, nausea etc. Interpersonal is a state in which the client may either experience withdrawal or may tend to be extremely vocal and expressive. Cognitive refers to the client's thought process post crisis, which may surface as denial, bewilderment, shock or disorientation. Lastly, the spiritual aspect is the client's reliance on faith to deal with the crisis (e. g. Questioning God's plans and the meanings and mysteries of life itself). (Hepworth, Rooney, Rooney, Strom-Gottfried, & Larsen, 2010) In crisis intervention, time is not a luxury; therefore, the worker has to address the ' <https://assignbuster.com/demanding-nature-of-the-job-itself-social-work-essay/>

here and now' problem, rather than delve into the past. They should aim to restore the client's equilibrium by alleviating the symptoms and calming the person, and encouraging them to self-actualize by giving directions (p. 381). In order to do crisis intervention work, (Gregoire & Jungers, 2007) the crisis worker should possess assessment skills to implement the six-step model of crisis intervention: 1) Defining the problem: Regardless of time constraints, it is essential to deduce a quick gist of the situation, to avoid any errors in misinterpreting the client. It is imperative to understand the client and pursue their point of view. 2) Ensuring safety: Crisis workers should maintain their safety by being alert of any imminent dangers that could affect the client or themselves; however, they are not liable to jeopardize their lives in the process. 3) Providing support: Similar to client-centered therapy, the crisis worker should demonstrate and communicate congruence, unconditional positive attitude, and empathy, to make the client feel valued and accepted. 4) Examining alternatives: In a state of crisis, the client can no longer process thoughts and make decisions as they feel there are no alternatives left. Therefore, the worker should think creatively, and provide the client with alternatives and suggest coping mechanisms as a mode to recoup and self-actualize (p. 560-561). 5) Making plans: Crisis workers (James, 2008) need to be directive and prompt in devising contingency plans and providing coping strategies. They should encourage the client to self-actualize in order to regain some confidence and stability, at least temporarily until help arrives. Further support can be given by suggesting referrals and giving directional steps. 6) Obtaining commitment: The last step should involve obtaining a firm commitment from the client, only after having reached a successful plan of action. Commitment can be made

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symbolically, by way of a handshake, written statement or a verbal promise. The termination of the intervention should take place only when the client regains his/her disequilibrium. Conclusively, the first three steps relate to good listening skills by attending, showing empathy, observing, understanding, caring and respect; whereas the last three steps require acting and directive skills. Another notable aspect to crisis intervention is the triage assessment. Roberts (2005) asserts the importance of this assessment as a tool to make simple, rapid and valid assessments on the levels of crisis and lethality, considering the short span of time. Triage assessment system enables the worker to accumulate information if possible (e. g. Person's demographics and background from a family member or relatives); gauge the person's mobility, coping mechanism and equilibrium; determine the severity of the situation; and, take required measures (e. g. Provide referrals to reliable support groups, or short-term hospitalization) to prevent the individual from doing any further self-harm to himself/herself or to others. The worker can then decide whether to take a directive, non directive or collaborative approach.(James, 2008) A good crisis worker will possess both theoretical and practical skills in order to carry out crisis intervention work. Some of the salient characteristics of an effective worker include :- 1) Life experiences: A worker lacking life experiences may face problems as he/she would not have anything to contribute, and likely to face frustration at some point. A crisis worker is a whole person with more life experiences, who, after overcoming past problems in a mature and stable way, and upon further training, can handle clients in a better way. However, if the worker has not overcome past problems, there is an increasing tendency to transfer the negative ideas or feelings on to the client. There are plenty of instances <https://assignbuster.com/demanding-nature-of-the-job-itself-social-work-essay/>

where workers decide to work with people who face the same problem as they have undergone. 2) Poise: There is a high chance that the worker may encounter unexpected or shocking situations, where any display of agitation, can lead the client to feed on the negativity, and aggravate the situation. Therefore, maintaining poise and control can encourage the client to calm down. 3) Creativity and flexibility: Thinking out-of-the-box and being able to find out different solutions and coping mechanisms at short notice, can serve as greater advantages in helping the client restore his equilibrium and focus on positivity. 4) Quick mental reflexes: A crisis worker should have quick mental reflexes without which, it will be difficult to handle a changing situation. Considering, there is no time to ponder and gather a lot of information, the worker should think and operate quickly, being ready for any twist in events. 5) Energy and Resiliency: The worker has to be physically and psychologically strong to face tough situations, irrespective of the outcome of the intervention. Upon termination of the intervention, crisis workers should adopt resiliency, and give no room for afterthought, lest that affect their morale and result in a burn out. 6) Other characteristics include courage, tenacity, and optimism, professional skills such as congruence, empathy and unconditional positive regard and a nonjudgmental attitude. One cannot compare a crisis worker's job to any other worker as not everyone can handle the job challenges, especially those who have high strung personalities. Hoff & Hoff (2012) highlights the fact that the sheer workload and difficulty of cases and the time taken to make a breakthrough with a client can overwhelm the crisis worker. Frustration is inevitable due to remote functioning with no direction or consultation on the scene of intervention. To deal with stress on a day-to-day basis maybe normal, but <https://assignbuster.com/demanding-nature-of-the-job-itself-social-work-essay/>

the situation could spiral beyond the worker's control if the stress piles up and he/she does not vent it out. According to Corey & Corey (2007), crisis workers who are not resilient and emotionally strong easily risk a burnout. Burnout is a product of extreme pressure and stress which stems from incessant dealing with people in crisis. It ultimately results in mental and physical exhaustion, negativity and helplessness and affects the worker in their professional and personal life. Feelings of failure, anguish, and empathic fatigue can occur eventually. Workers tend to overlook their own needs and invest their energy in work, without taking time out from their routine as they feel people are dependent on their help. The lack of appreciation for their work can also dampen their spirit and enthusiasm and lead to discouragement. Constant reflection on their own experiences and personal transformations which made them stronger individuals is necessary to help crisis workers intervene effectively. Watching for early signs of fatigue and seeking timely help, can avoid burnout. Involvement in diverse activities, in their personal life, can relieve stress. Hoff & Hoff (2012) Employers can help the worker resolve burnout issues by providing them with compensatory holidays and periodic counseling, introducing a problem-solving committee for staff; and, rotating the workers to participate in other diverse works within the agency. In conclusion, all the above dynamics confirm one fact: A crisis workers job of crisis intervention is demanding in all respects and it takes a strong personality and multiple skills to deal with the sensitivities of a crisis situation. Correct and timely intervention can avert further calamity. The author feels that crisis workers are like unsung heroes who do their job courageously and with tenacity, but disappear without recognition on a job well done, only to get ready for the next mission.

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