

# Characteristics and skills of human services workers assignment



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The purpose of this paper is to write about the essential characteristics and skills of mental health human services workers. When discussing the fundamental characteristics of a human services worker, Team B felt that communication skills are vital. Without rapport and connection with the client, other skills cannot be effective. Of course, the most fundamental ingredients for a human services worker are a compassionate, patient, caring heart and a desire to see each individual achieve a personal best in all areas of life. Without vibrant meaning, purpose, and direction, our life can never flower” (Doherty, 2009). Everyday life presents different mental, emotional, and social challenges and rewards for the client that must be addressed by the human services professional; various forms of abuse such as physical, mental, drug, alcohol, sexual, and elderly abuse along with additional life conditions such as, poverty, financial hardships, unemployment, and illness are among the most familiar. Many people just need a helping hand to get started on the way to a better life .

For the human services worker, the essential characteristic of communication, beginning with the art of listening, is the foundation on which the relationship with the client is based. Listening means putting aside personal work or thoughts and truly hearing, sometimes through anger or insecurity, what the other person is saying with his or her heart.

Consequently, compassion brings an emotional toll on the human services professional, so another essential trait is the knowing of one’s limits and establishing these boundaries early in the association to prevent burnout which is a detriment among human services workers in all professions. It makes sense that an emotionally weary individual would be less disposed to

make the emotional investment required in dealing with clients as individuals rather than as depersonalized cases” (Drake & Yadama, 1996). On Jan 10, 2010, in a speech to The Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Lima, Ohio, Tammie Colon, vice president of behavioral health services for Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio, stated: “...Most... agencies deal in some way with social service, they are dealing with other human beings, who present to them, particularly in this economy, with a need and a crisis. Ms Colon said caregivers need to know “ how to manage that and understand where the client is in the crisis so we can respond appropriately and not become part of the crisis (Colon 2010). According to Ms. Colon, becoming part of the crisis happens when as caretakers “ we’re so busy often times just doing what we need to do to take care of clients that we forget to take care of ourselves, and to establish relationships, which always makes our job easier” (Colon, 2010).

When a client ceases to be an individual and a human services worker becomes desensitized, the client is being cheated and the services are no longer productive. So, as a human services worker, one must take care of one’s self cognitively, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Replenishing one’s spirit must be a priority in order to help one’s self and others. As a young human services worker, one tends to be very serious and highly motivated to cure the problems of the whole world. If this exuberance is not put into check right away, burnout will occur in a very short time.

Experienced professionals need to be on the lookout for this behavior and become mentors to these “ newbies”. Mentoring presents a timely

perspective that may take many years to acquire otherwise Some other  
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essential personal characteristics of the successful human services worker are:

- Self Discipline- the HS worker must be involved and motivated to commit to the role to be fulfilled and have the responsibility for zealously applying one's self to all aspects of the needs and care of clients. Honesty- being straightforward showing integrity, openness and sincerity; these values will inspire trust in the client
- Competence-Being decisive but not arrogant; basing all decisions on reason and moral principles, not emotions
- Open-mindedness-being willing to see a situation from different points of view; not allowing one's biases to cloud judgment
- Fairness-showing fair treatment to everyone; showing sensitivity to the feelings of others-seeing the potential best in everyone and working toward the goal that the client will also see these traits
- Advocacy-Willingness to stand up for the client's wishes over others exerting pressure in a different direction
- Personal care-A human services worker must take good care of himself or herself physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually; one must know his or her own limits, both physically and emotionally
- Love of learning; continually striving to better one's self
- A sense of humor-being able to laugh at oneself keeps one grounded from becoming arrogant

Some detrimental personal traits of the human services worker include the following:

- Being judgmental-Everyone has a right to his or her own opinion; whether right or wrong, this opinion must be respected.
- Stereotyping-Prejudice with a fancy name. Human service workers must not judge a person by how he looks; everyone has a right to express preferences in America under the first amendment.
- Prejudice: Any kind. " Prejudice is the enemy of justice" (Clark, 2009).
- Unwillingness to admit to a mistake-Everyone makes mistakes; only a person of humility and integrity is willing to take responsibility and admit a

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mistake, fix the mistake if possible, and move on. •Unwillingness to grow and learn new methods and ideas; unwillingness to let go of old, outdated thinking. Unwillingness to take one's inventory to know what areas need to be improved upon. •Arrogance: No matter how long in the field, a human services worker does not know everything; every situation is different. Human services workers must not take themselves too seriously. •Greed. Entering the human services business only for the money means one is in the wrong occupation. Human service workers give, not take; salaries are not proportionate to the tasks involved. The reward is in the client's empowerment. •One is not suited for the particular position.

An advocate may not be suited to be a mediator. A human services worker must find the area of service for which one is matched. Skills that a human services worker needs to have developed before embarking on this career include: •As mentioned above, communications skills are of the essence. •Critical thinking skills–human services workers must be prepared to handle instant, emergency and urgent situations. •Conflict resolution skills–Life is full of conflict and the human services worker must be able to bring some sort of acceptable answer for the client. Creative thinking–In this day of diminishing budgets, human services workers must be inventive in procuring services for clients, as well as finding innovative, productive ways for the client to express creativity and skills. •Leadership skills with compassion and understanding are essential for making sure the least amount of stress happens for a client and family. •Motivation–The ability to motivate others while being sensitive to their background. •Dependability–A human services worker must be reliable, responsible, dependable, and carry out the

obligations accepted. Complete training in the area of service; one cannot serve a client without full knowledge what to do to meet the client's needs.

- Objectivity-to be able to handle situations without influence by personal feelings, prejudices, or interpretations.
- Human services workers should have certain basic trainings such as CPR.
- The skill of saying “ no” when necessary; clients will try to rely on the human services worker rather than to look within themselves for solutions.
- Human services workers must be organized and be able to easily retrieve important information when requested.

Two excellent opportunities to gain experience in the human services field are volunteering and work experience. Many college students are assigned to work directly with clients while college graduates may be assigned duties as counselors, program coordinators, case supervisors, and group home or halfway house managers. High school students are required to initiate a senior project of some sort of community service thus creating opportunities for one's self and one's peers to learn first hand the art of serving others.

Volunteers at agencies, hospitals, and other social services organizations are thoroughly trained before making contact with the client. This training is valuable because one first learns in this atmosphere what it takes to become a human services worker as well as to have one on one contact and develop compassion, perception, and empathy. These values are unselfish benefiting both the giver and the receiver. Mental health is involved in every area of human services social interaction; human services ministers to the whole person to empower this person to achieve his or her highest potential.

No substitute for experience exists; book learning, classes, and discussion are merely introductions for the “ real thing” of experience. “ Getting down into the trenches” is the only way to know what another feels or needs; the more practice and familiarity of a situation, the better understanding of the attitude, compassion, and activity needed. The question in our assignment asks if there is such a thing as a “ natural born helper. ” According to a November 30, 2009 article in the New York Times, babies as young as 18 months show a natural willingness to help (Wade, 2009).

In this same article, Dr. Tomasello, a developmental psychologist and co-director of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, opines that this “ helping behavior seems to be innate because it appears so early and before many parents start teaching children the rules of polite behavior” (Tomasello, 2009). Additionally, Dr. Tomasello finds that this helping is not enhanced by rewards, suggesting that it is not influenced by training and concluding that helping is a natural inclination, not something imposed by parents or culture (Tomasello, 2009).

This student believes that some people are born with a happy disposition; some people are born with a loving caring heart; some people are born knowing from childhood just what was wanted out of life: to serve others. In his book, “ Natural Born Manager,” Ed Parr says that some people have individual strengths, talents, and abilities also known as aptitudes (Parr, 2009). Knowing one’s unique aptitudes and how to use them is the key to becoming the best one can be. So as not to waste these aptitudes, one must find one’s passion in life and joy in one’s work, identify one’s place in this world, and fulfill one’s destiny (Parr, 2009).

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Someone in this student's life that who would be an exemplary human services worker is Delora who runs a Curves exercise salon for women. Without being labeled as such, Delora is already a " human services worker. " Curves attracts many older women along with women who are overweight or have physical challenges that cause trouble in exercising. People who sign up with Delora's gym are usually disheartened, discouraged, and ready to give up; most have been bullied by the doctor to attend the Curves routine, or these women would not be there. This student has first hand knowledge of this position.

Fortunately, Delora does not allow or accept negativity in her shop. After traveling across Lancaster to the west side salon, the first time this student timidly entered the room, this student was greeted like an old friend and was introduced to the other perceived " unfortunates" that were following the exercising regimen. Everyone said " hi" and was very welcoming. Noticeably, these women did not seem to be minding the agony as much as would have been expected; lively music was playing and a variety of different-sized women were laughing and talking while in various states of amusing exercise positions.

This student was then initiated on all the torture machine routines and boogie boards and given personal, precise instruction on the use of each one. The one bright spot in the ordeal was the fact that each machine was only used for 30 seconds, and then one moved to the boogie board for 30 seconds, and then on to the next machine; this tormenting journey took place twice. This student planned on escaping as soon as Delora's back was turned. Of course, having an eagle eye and great perception, Delora stuck <https://assignbuster.com/characteristics-and-skills-of-human-services-workers-assignment/>



with this student until the end, encouraging, plodding, motivating, and caring about this reluctant student.

Delora knows every patron's name and the personal challenge that brought the person to Curves; Delora is always ready with a word of direction, hope and encouragement inspiring persistence. This woman has had personal tragedy that allows her to relate to the pain of others. While the light and airy room is in constant motion, Delora stands in the middle and watches to see that everyone is using the machines correctly, or adjusting the exercises accordingly. At the same time, Delora is telling personal, funny, family stories; and encourages everyone to join in.

In this way, patrons begin to know each other and share in each others ups and downs (pun intended). Delora encourages the “ old timers” to assist the “ new comers” when one gets lost or confused, establishing camaraderie. The atmosphere in this woman's shop is one of support and accomplishment. When milestones are met, everyone shares in the victory. Little games are played and trivia questions posed that keep the ladies thinking; challenging the intellect. Everyone encourages each other when a game is being played.

There is a little fun competition but never rivalry; everything is done in a spirit of sharing and group comradeship. Whenever a client leaves, everyone shouts “ good bye,” “ see you next time,” or “ have a great day,” leaving one with a feeling of belonging. On the message board is always an inspiring tip of the day from Delora or one of the other clients. Delora is a woman of faith; this lady never mentions religion—this lady lives a life of faith—Delora knows how to bring out the best of a person.

If something has happened in her home or life that is upsetting, Delora will share and accept the wall of support that is given. Delora is not a wimpy person; Delora is strong, vital, and fun. This lady is not afraid to stop negative or destructive attitudes or words; but this is accomplished through redirecting the energy to helping others or accomplishing a goal. Delora's staff has her same mind-set; Delora would have it no other way. As much as pain is linked to the iron monsters in the salon, going to Delora's Curves salon is always a fun expectation.

Delora has a vocation to encourage, uplift, motivate, push, inspire, and not give up on those that are sent to her dispirited and downcast; at the same time, Delora includes everyone around her in creating this stimulating environment. In contrast, Delora's sister Leah has a Curves salon conveniently right down the street from this student's home. After experiencing the uplift of Delora's gym, walking into Leah's establishment is like walking into a dungeon. Leah is negative, gloomy, and the feeling is " oh woe is me! " Leah sits at her desk with a frown on her face which turns away prospective clients.

This student believes in karma and does not believe that a coincidence led this student to the west side Curves. This student will travel the vast desert (in a car, not on a camel) to attend Delora's outstanding salon filled with achievement, fun and friendship. Clark, D. R. (2004), Instructional System Design Concept Map. Retrieved January 30, 2010 from <http://nmlink.com/~donclark/hrd/ahold/isd.html> Colon, T. (2010, January 12). Changing seasons open for now. Lima News. Retrieved January 31, 2010 from <http://www.limaohio.com/> Doherty, K. (2009). The purpose principle. <https://assignbuster.com/characteristics-and-skills-of-human-services-workers-assignment/>

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