

Identifying, Evaluating and Developing Personal Practice Models

A MANUAL FOR MSW STUDENTS
IN THE PPM MASTERS PROJECT PATH

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OVERVIEW OF THE PERSONAL PRACTICE MODEL

1. Introduction (1/2 page)

- A. Introductory paragraph/ Description of PPM concept.
- B. Why did you choose this option?
- C. What do you expect it will do for you?

2. Practice Components (7-8 pages)

Describe and discuss the following seven components of your personal practice model (you may include components from SW8441 paper):

- A) natural helping skills
- B) learned skills and roles
- C) practice models and perspectives
- D) decision-making methods
- E) views of practice efficacy
- F) views of human diversity and cultural competence
- G) social work values

3. Influences (5-6 pages)

Describe the influence from the following six major sources on the development of your PPM:

- A) life experience
- B) theories of human behavior
- C) research
- D) practice settings
- E) special mentors
- F) formal social work education

4. Special Interest (2 pages)

Describe your area of special interest. Child Welfare Scholars are required to identify some aspect of the field of child welfare, but not the entire field, as their special interest area. To narrow down this very broad field to something of special interest, you may want to consult with your primary reader and/or other faculty member.

5. Literature Review (4-5 pages)

Complete a literature review on your area of special interest. Include summary of “new” knowledge/understanding gained from literature review

6. Interviews—Introduction (1/2 page)

Interview 3 MSW practitioners in your area of special interest using the interview procedures described in the PPM manual. Write an introductory paragraph about how you further developed your PPM by interviewing three MSW practitioners. Explain why you selected these practitioners and how they relate to your area of interest.

7. Interviews—Methodology (1-2 pages)

Begin by listing the broad questions you will be exploring in your interviews using the PPM manual as your guide. Be sure to follow the informed consent process outlined in your PPM

Manual and to review the process with your primary reader before you begin the interviews.

Describe the qualitative research methodology used in your MSW interviews in the following areas:

- A. sample selection and description
- B. data collection
- C. data analysis
- D. validity concerns

8. Analysis and Discussion

- A. Present an analysis of results of MSW interviews (3-4 pages)
- B. Discuss what you learned from MSW interviews (1-2 pages)
- C. Discuss relationship between your PPM and the advanced generalist model (1-2 pages)

9. Summary (2-3 pages)

Summarize total PPM and describe and discuss implications of your PPM for further development of your social work knowledge, skills and values, and overall uniqueness as a social work practitioner

A reasonable page range based on the above section guidelines is 25-31 pages with a maximum of 35 pages to be granted with permission of the instructor for special reasons.

OVERVIEW

This manual contains material to help you identify your uniqueness as a social work practitioner. You will find this to be a challenging but satisfying learning experience, one that should help you gain increased professional self-confidence. You will note as you begin using this manual that the guidelines provided for the various tasks you will be asked to address are given in considerable detail with numerous sample definitions and examples provided. This has been shown from past student use of the manual to result in higher quality final papers than when less specific guidelines are used. You should keep in mind, however, that the examples given are only illustrative examples and not meant to be suggestive of your own particular views and understandings. When you complete the tasks involved in identifying, evaluating and developing your personal practice model you will have gained a depth of awareness of your professional self and increased knowledge of the profession that will make you a more competent social work practitioner.

The rationale for the Personal Practice Model learning experience is based on two assumptions: 1) that whether consciously recognized or not, all social workers, both beginning and highly experienced ones, *do* have personal practice models, 2) that it is highly desirable to have conscious awareness of the nature of this PPM in order to be in control of one's practice behaviors, and through *critical-thinking* and *evidence-based practice* avoid basic practice errors. While the primary purpose of this exercise is to help you identify your uniqueness as a social work practitioner, students in the past have frequently reported that it has enhanced their understanding and appreciation of the profession overall. Also, it is not unusual for employers to ask job applicants to describe their approach to social work practice, and having gone through the PPM learning experience will serve you well should you be asked this question in a job interview. You can even say that you once wrote a paper on it.

THE CONCEPT OF PERSONAL PRACTICE MODELS

In their MSW studies students are exposed to numerous bodies of knowledge and conceptual frameworks pertaining to understandings of human behavior. Your overall experience in the MSW program should bring you much satisfaction as you gain new knowledge about helping clients and acquire practice skills for applying this knowledge. Along with this positive experience in the educational process, however, students sometimes experience anticipatory anxiety as a result of thinking about the next courses they will be taking, and from thinking even further about the time when they will begin professional practice. Social work faculty, all of whom have spent many years in the student role themselves, are aware of this situation and are concerned about how best to help students cope with the problem. The most basic purpose of the PPM learning experience is to help you gain increased professional self-confidence through identifying and evaluating your *current* social work knowledge and skills and to further develop your personal model of social work practice.

A major theory in higher education known as *constructivist* theory postulates that helping students take account of and credit themselves for what they already know is an important determinant of new learning. The PPM exercise described in this manual will help you do just that – to credit yourself with your current unique understandings of social work practice which will very likely enhance your future learning.

To credit yourself in this way you will first have to identify the specific nature of the characteristics or “components” of your PPM. To address this task, you will see that the components of a PPM are provided for you in this manual, but you will have to describe the specific nature of these components for yourself. You are the only one who can do this. While it is assumed that all social work practitioners share certain common characteristics that go to make up their professional selves, it is the more specific nature of these characteristics that distinguishes one practitioner from another. It is the variation among individual

practitioners on the specifics of the PPM components that results in the existence of personal practice models. No two practitioners will ever express the basic PPM components exactly alike – even if someday social workers might be cloned; do not laugh, it could happen! Even those who claim to be “purest” in the application of a given practice approach will demonstrate individual differences in the application of that particular approach.

To further help you grasp the nature and importance of the personal practice model concept for social work, consider an analogy from the profession of medicine. In medical school, students are taught many standard bodies of knowledge and various medical procedures that are learned and practiced in very similar ways by all physicians in given areas of practice. Obviously, some physicians have better “bedside manners” than others and slightly different techniques for performing the same procedures. However, in medical practice it matters not a great deal how a surgeon views the procedure for removing Henry Vaughn’s ruptured appendix. He/she either performs the operation essentially the way it was taught in their surgical residency or the patient may be put at great risk.

A different situation is the case, however, for the school social worker faced with the challenge of helping Jimmy Brown discontinue his disruptive school behavior and thereby avoid being expelled as threatened by the principal. It matters considerably how this social worker views a *behavioristic* intervention approach, for example, compared to a *psychodynamic* approach. This social worker was almost certainly exposed to both approaches in his/her training and most likely has an inclination toward one or the other. This inclination will be partly related to the kind of personality this practitioner has, his/her basic beliefs about human behavior, whatever differential emphasis may have been placed on behavioristic vs. psychodynamic approaches in his/her professional training and the nature of his/her previous practice experience. There is no standard social work intervention approach to Johnny’s problematic behavior. Entire textbooks have been written advocating each of the mentioned practice approaches for this kind of school behavior problem. On another systems level, a social work practitioner seeking to address inadequate social and economic conditions in a community may proceed with a *locality development* approach to community intervention or the very different approach of *social action*. In both examples of the disruptive student and the need for community intervention, the actual approach taken by given social workers will reflect their uniqueness as practitioner i.e. their personal practice models.

1. INTRODUCTION - THE BASIC LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Write an introductory paragraph describing the PPM concept. Explain why you chose this option for your Master's Project and explain what you hope it will do for you. Then give an overview of your paper.

2. PRACTICE COMPONENTS

Describe and discuss the seven components of your PPM, which are defined below. Each section should be one or two paragraphs long.

A. Natural Helping Skills

Your natural helping skills are those which: 1) you may have acquired from the influence of any relevant genetic tendencies toward helping behaviors, 2) you acquired from your "growing up" experiences i.e. from being socialized. These are skills that were usually acquired with little or no conscious awareness on your part at the time that you were indeed acquiring them. They are the helping skills you use spontaneously, not requiring forethought or planning. In many instances of your professional activities these skills will remain in continuing spontaneous use along with whatever additional helping skills you have or will acquire through formal training.

B. Learned Skills & Roles

Skills, techniques and roles are labels for what you do specifically with and for clients i.e. your practice behaviors. Establishing trust is an example of a skill. Setting clients at ease is an example of a technique and acting as an enabler is one of the social work practice roles. You can look at other examples in the Appendix. Try to distinguish your learned practice behaviors from your natural helping skills as best you can. What skills, techniques and roles are utilized predominately in your personal practice model?

C. Guiding Practice Models and Perspectives

A practice model is a coherent, integrated framework embodying a social work philosophy, value system and general intervention goals along with practitioner procedural guidelines and desired client outcomes from application of the model. Practice models, on the other hand, provide guidelines for changing behavior, and/or conditions deemed necessary to change by practitioners. Social work practice perspectives draw from social work values and theories to shape or focus social work intervention and can be used in conjunction with social work practice models. The Appendix provides examples and clarification.

D. Decision-Making Methods

Every aspect of social work practice involves decision-making. The outcomes of these decisions on whatever practice levels can play an important part in case outcomes. Practitioners do not often think of their methods of making decisions. If asked, some will claim that they make practice decisions without conscious thought. Some claim they make "gut decisions" or use their "intuition" or "what seems right." Some say their decisions are based on their experience. Think about how you believe decision-making enters into your social work practice and try to describe the methods you use for making these decisions. Give a brief example of how you have made a practice decision.

E. Views of Practice Efficacy

This component of personal practice models raises the question: “By what means do social work practitioners evaluate the results of their practice activities?” What do practitioners take as evidence that their practice activities are actually accomplishing what they think they are? All practitioners have some means of gauging their effectiveness. What is yours? How would you convince someone else that your method(s) are valid? How would you answer a client’s question about whether or not the way you are handling their case is an effective approach?

F. Human Diversity and Cultural Competence

The term “human diversity” refers to the ways in which humans differ from each another, as individuals, groups, communities and societies. Some major categories of diversity for individuals are gender, age, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, cultural background, marital/family status, social class, religion, occupation, and political affiliation. Groups, communities and societies differ from each other in terms of the aggregates of various individual differences that can be identified and their institutional differences such as governments, schools, economies, and social welfare systems.

Think about your understanding of the phenomenon of human diversity, and address the following in addition to other considerations you may have.

- How do you view human diversity in relation to the profession of social work and social work practice?
- How do you think your own background of life experience with human diversity may have impacted the development of your PPM?

Thinking of *cultural competence* in social work as the ways in which individual practitioners, agencies and social programs give consideration to the various aspects of human diversity, how do you see yourself as a social work practitioner functioning in relation to cultural competence? What would be your own definition of professional cultural competence?

G. Social Work Values

The term “value” refers to a quality that one holds to be worthwhile. One may personally value certain physical activities such as jogging or swimming. Nonphysical qualities can also be values such as patriotism, personal freedom, and helpfulness. Sometimes these kinds of value examples are called attitudes but are nonetheless values because for those who possess these attitudes, they are held to be worthwhile i.e. of value.

Value orientations in social work refer to the material and non-material qualities social workers prefer for their clients because they believe them to be worthwhile for client wellbeing. Some of the dominant values held by the profession for clients pertain to respect for human diversity, client self-determination and the right to experience the benefits of social justice.

You could begin your work on the component of social work values by thinking about your own personal values and write a paragraph describing some of the values that you feel are most important for your personal life. Describe only those that you feel comfortable discussing. Next, describe some

of your social work values. Some of these may overlap or be nearly the same as some of your personal values, which you should point out if this is the case. Do you hold what might be called traditional social work values such as the three mentioned above or perhaps you hold other values for social work that you think are being neglected by the profession? Describe what you believe to be the primary source(s) of the social work values you hold in your PPM. For example, you may believe that some come primarily from your parents and how you were raised. You may believe that some were derived from rational thought, religious beliefs, or your professional education.

Lastly, discuss your personal values related to your professional values. Do you believe that they are compatible or do you perhaps see a degree of conflict between one or more of your personal and professional values? If so, briefly describe and discuss what you believe are some of the implications of this conflict for your PPM.

DEFINITION GUIDELINES FOR SOURCES OF PPM INFLUENCE

Describe and discuss the six areas of influence, which are defined below. Each section should be one or two paragraphs long.

A. Life Experience

If you believe you have learned important things about human behavior and “helping” before you became a social work student and that you learned these things in other than a professional or academic context, you should classify these as learned from life experience. What have you learned from life itself that contributes to your personal practice model? This can also include religious/spiritual experiences and beliefs. You do not need to give lengthy discussions of these life experiences.

B. Theories of Human Behavior

This source of influence pertains to contributions to your personal model from various formal theories of human behavior recognized by one or more of the helping professions or academic disciplines. Examples are systems theory, learning theory (behaviorism), cognitive theory, psychodynamic theory, various small group theories, theories of multiculturalism, community theory, and conflict theory. This would not refer to unrecognized “theories” that you or your colleagues, for example, may have formulated about given kinds of client problems.

C. Research

Research refers to contributions to your personal model which have come from either published or unpublished research studies based on group data and also includes single subject designs. What have you learned from research that has influenced the development of your personal practice model and to what extent has research been influential in relation to your actual practice activities?

D. Practice Settings

Do you believe that certain aspects of the agencies (including field placement agencies) and practice

settings in which you may have had experiences have influenced your PPM? For agencies, this would include things such as agency structure and organization, policies, and supervision you experienced. Practice setting refers primarily to the kind of service provided by a given agency e.g. mental health, child welfare, crisis intervention, women's shelter etc.

E. Special Mentor(s)

You may have had a teacher, supervisor, consultant, workshop leader or colleague whom you feel has made an important contribution to your PPM. This person may have influenced you in a formal learning situation or through informal teaching or modeling. If you have encountered a special mentor how did he/she contribute to your PPM?

F. Formal Social Work Education

Granted that you will have discussed certain aspects of your social work education previously e.g. practice models and learned practice behaviors, try now to consider the whole of your social work education up to this point (both bachelors and masters levels) as a source of influence on your PPM.

4. SPECIAL INTEREST

Describe your area of special interest and explain why you have chosen to focus on it in your PPM. It is helpful to discuss with your primary reader your choice of special interest area prior to beginning your literature review.

6. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conduct a literature review and cite a minimum of **six** peer-reviewed sources (e.g. academic journal articles) related to your special area of interest. How do you see the importance of each PPM component for your special interest area and how do you think they might be applied to help achieve effective services to clients served by this practice area?

7. INTERVIEW – INTRODUCTION

Prior to beginning the interviews, review the procedures in this manual and with your faculty advisor. You must use the informed consent form included in the Appendix.

Write a brief introduction regarding why you think it is important to obtain selected views of social work practice from MSW practitioners and compare these to your own. Also, indicate that in order to have the practitioner interviews be as meaningful as possible, certain aspects of qualitative research methodology were utilized. Identify the research questions that you will be exploring. You should ask the following broad questions and develop an additional question(s) that addresses your area of special interest:

- What major practice models/theories/strategies do you use in your work?
- How do you assess cases, projects etc., to determine what the problem(s) is (are)?

- How do you measure the effectiveness of your work?
- What major issues and challenges do you see in your field of practice, and do you believe they should be addressed?

8. INTERVIEW - METHODOLOGY

Below are the qualitative research methods to be addressed followed by more specific directions.

SAMPLE SELECTION & DESCRIPTION -- Selecting & describing the interviewees

DATA COLLECTION -- Conducting & recording the interview contents

DATA ANALYSIS -- Identification of interview content themes

VALIDITY CONCERNS -- Maximizing accuracy of interview content

A. SAMPLE SELECTION & DESCRIPTION -- Indicate that your sample was a *purposive* sample consisting of three MSW practicing social workers selected for their willingness to respond to the three major aspects of social work practice of concern. Indicate additionally that the following individuals were not eligible for the sample: 1) UMD faculty members, 2) individuals in a supervisory relationship with the student, 3) those who for any reason might have a relationship with the student the nature of which might influence the interviewee's responses to questions asked in the interview.

Indicate how your respondents were initially contacted e.g. phone, face-to-face, letter, and that those initially accepting were sent the interview consent form for review and final decision to participate. Indicate the number accepting and refusing the invitation to participate.

To the extent that you can without making your interviewees feel uncomfortable in any way, try to obtain the following descriptors and any others you might believe would further help describe your sample of respondents:

- Date & time of each respondent interview
- Kind of agency & location (no agency names)
- Gender of interviewee (no names)
- Position title/function
- Years post-MSW practice
- Area of special social work interest

If you believe, that the anonymity of the respondents will be comprised in any way from including this information in your PPM (e.g., there are only one or two MSWs in Duluth that fit this description), note that you are withholding this information to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

B. DATA COLLECTION -- You must use obtain informed consent by using the approved form in the Appendix. If you desire to use direct quotes from the interview, you must ask permission for the interviewee to do so. Indicate how you conducted and recorded the interviews.

Following are some considerations:

- Provide sufficient time for the interview given the desired content.
- Use an interview guide i.e. for the three major content areas with pre-identified probes.
- Set the respondent at ease.
- Ask the respondent to repeat anything you think you may not have heard correctly.
- Rephrase anything you heard that lacked clarity for you but never challenge the respondent.
- Take accurate notes and/or use a recorder during the interview.

C. DATA ANALYSIS -- Indicate how you identified themes in the data -- “data” in this case being content from the interviews. Briefly indicate how you identified themes of ideas verbalized by each of the three respondents in the three major content areas.

D. VALIDITY CONCERNS -- Validity concerns in qualitative research pertain primarily to problems of how to maximize the degree of accuracy achieved in obtaining and reporting the data. It raises the question “Did you really come away from your respondents with what they intended to convey to you, and what features of your methodology can you cite that maximizes the probability that you did?” Look back over your methodology and identify those procedures you believe contributed to maximizing validity. For example, use of a voice recording device in data collection increases accuracy of interview content over note taking alone. It would be appropriate for you to cite your research text or other sources regarding how you are addressing validity issues.

9. ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION

- A.** Present an analysis of the results of the MSW interviews Identify the main themes that emerged in response to each of your broad research questions. Reporting excerpts of direct quotes from respondent interviews provide readers with the respondent’s own words, not your interpretation, and can help to illustrate the themes you have identified. If you do this, our informed consent procedures require you to ask permission from the respondent to use direct quotes.
- B.** Overall, discuss what you have learned from conducting the MSW interviews? How have they informed your PPM? Discuss how the literature review and interviews together have enhanced your knowledge of the special interest area. Consider the extent to which practitioners in this special interest area are using concepts, such as, the strength perspective, evidence-based practice and critical thinking in their practice.
- C.** In this section, you are to **write in detail** about your understanding of the advanced generalist perspective for social work practice and how it compares to your Personal Practice Model. Be specific.

10. SUMMARY

Discuss the nature of your experience in identifying, evaluating, and developing your PPM and indicate the extent to which you feel it may have been helpful to you or not (be specific).

Give a brief summary of your PPM and discuss implications for further development of your social work knowledge, skills and values, and overall uniqueness as a social work practitioner

APPENDIX

SOCIAL WORK TECHNOLOGY

In a human service profession such as social work, “technology” refers to the conceptual and procedural tools and their application in carrying out practice activities. The terms defined below with examples refer to various aspects of the technology of social work. Although there are differences of opinion about the definitions, meanings and distinctions of various terms, those provided below represent fairly common usage.

PRACTICE MODELS AND PERSPECTIVES

A practice model (sometimes loosely termed “approach” or “theory”) is a coherent, integrated framework embodying a social work philosophy, value system and general intervention goals along with practitioner procedural guidelines and desired client outcomes from application of the model. In more detail, a well-constructed practice model explicates:

- An assumed purpose of the profession
- Client target populations
- The nature of client problems
- A classification of client problems
- Desirable practitioner characteristics
- The Nature of client involvement
- The nature of client-practitioner relationships
- Procedural guidelines
- Desirable intervention outcomes
- An approach to evaluating outcomes

Examples of social work practice models are The Life Model, Task-Centered Model, Psychosocial Model, and Problem-Solving Model. Three community organization models commonly discussed in social work are locality development, social action and social planning. Any given practice model may utilize various explanatory theories, practice methods, skills, techniques, strategies and practice roles. Thus, the Task-Centered Model, for example, utilizes action theory, cognitive theory, behaviorism (learning theory) and ego psychology all of which are explanatory theories. It can be utilized with individual, family, group, organizational and community practice modalities.

Social work practice perspectives use social work values and theories to shape or focus social work intervention. For example the strengths perspective guides social workers to focus on identifying and building upon strengths. The ecological-systems perspective guides social workers to focus on the interaction between individuals and their environments.

THEORIES OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR

Explanatory Theory

An explanatory theory is an interlocking set of explanatory descriptions, concepts, ideas and predictive propositions about given aspects of the central phenomenon of concern in the theory. The primary function of explanatory theory is to provide understandings of human functioning as it is thought to occur. In contrast, is practice theory which is concerned with the changing of behavior to how it “ought to be” according to some set of desired outcomes based on a value system. Historically, the profession of social

work has utilized explanatory theories generated primarily by the social science disciplines – mainly psychology, sociology and cultural anthropology. Each of these disciplines has produced various specific theories which you have or will encounter in your formal education as a social worker. There is probably general agreement that so far, social work has produced no explanatory theories of its own.

Micro-level Theory

An example of explanatory theory on the micro level is psychoanalytic theory, which assumes that significant aspects of human behavior are controlled by the influence of residuals from one's developmental history operating through the unconscious mind. Another very different example of explanatory theory is behavioral theory, which maintains that behaviors are governed primarily by their consequence.

Mezzo-level Theory

Many of the theories used at the micro level are also applied to human behavior in families and groups. Systems theory is used to explain how families and group function, as well as, theories regarding family and group development.

Macro-level Theory

An example of explanatory theory on the macro level (organizational) is human relations theory, which emphasize for the good of both workers and management the importance of positive human relations within organizations. Rational theory and conflict theory are other examples of how theory is applied to the policy making process.

PROCEDURAL TOOLS

Practice Modality: The term “practice modality” refers to focused professional activities directed toward change objectives for a particular size/kind of system unit. There are basically five: Individual, Group, Family and Community.

Practice Skills: A practice skill is a constellation of practice techniques employed toward the accomplishment of a case goal or objective. Practice skills are thought of as being performed within an ongoing time frame. Examples of practice skills are:

- establishing trust
- engagement
- promoting mutuality
- eliciting information
- problem exploration
- establishing incentives
- assessment
- contracting
- decision making
- modeling
- problem-solving
- evaluation
- termination
- referring
- report writing

Practice Techniques: Practice techniques are more specific procedures within a skill area. Techniques are usually thought of as being performed within a more constrained time frame than skills. Examples are:

- setting at ease
- supporting
- clarifying
- reframing
- advising
- reinforcing
- challenging
- physical gestures
- voice inflection
- pausing

In many instances skill and technique should be view on a continuum. For example “support” may be ongoing throughout a case and thus viewed as a skill, but at any given point in a client contact viewed as a more specific time-limited action and then properly referred to as a technique.

Practice Roles: Practice role denotes a patterned constellation of skills and techniques underpinned by professional knowledge, attitudes and values executed toward the support of client goal attainment.

Examples are:

- therapist
- advocate
- consultant
- organizer
- case manager
- teacher
- mediator
- broker
- negotiator
- enabler

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR PPM PAPERS

Although this project requires you to produce a highly individualistic piece of work in identifying your personal practice model, a topic on which you alone are the authority, the following criteria will be used in common for evaluating all student papers.

1. The extent to which you followed all the requirements of the project for each section.
2. The extent to which you adequately explained your thinking about each component of your personal model.
3. The degree of consistency and absence of contradictions among the various components of your personal model. Or, if inconsistencies and contradictions are in fact present, the extent to which you show awareness of these even though they have not been resolved.
4. The extent to which you adequately summarize your personal model so that another social worker not familiar with the project could gain a clear understanding of your personal practice model.
5. The extent to which your personal model gives evidence of being conscientiously identified and evaluated. It should be noted that the criterion here is not the “correctness” of your model, since by definition any personal model you describe is correct, but rather evidence of careful, conscientious thought in thinking out the characteristics of your personal model.
6. The extent to which your paper is free from factual mistakes. An example of a factual mistake: “B. F. Skinner played a major role in founding the social work profession.”
7. The extent to which your paper is written on a graduate level
8. The overall quality of your paper.

APA HEADING LEVELS

Shown below are four APA heading levels correctly positioned on the page with relevant italicized words, upper and lower case letters.

(Level 1)

Centered, Non-italicized, With First Letter Caps of All Words

(Level 2)

Centered, Italicized, With First Letter Caps of All Words

(Level 3)

Flush to Left Margin, Italicized With First Letter Caps of All Words

(Level 4)

Indented, italicized with lower case letters of all words except initial letter of first word

(Level 4 headings begin the first line of a paragraph)

CONSENT FORM

The Identification, Evaluation, and Development of Personal Practice Models

You are invited to be in a research study being conducted by graduate social work students at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a practicing social worker who holds a MSW degree and do not have a supervisory relationship with the student who would be interviewing you. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to provide UMD graduate social work students with an in-depth learning experience in identifying and evaluating their own unique approach to social work practice and to further develop this approach based on several kinds of information they will gain through study and direct input from practicing social workers. One requirement is for each student to interview three practicing MSW social workers concerning their views on social work practice and compare these with their own views.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask that you respond to the student's questions about your views of social work practice and how you implement these views in your work. These will be open-ended questions, and your answers will be completely voluntary. In order to have an accurate record of your responses, the student will take summary notes during the interview and may also use a voice recorder, but your name will not be connected to your responses nor will your identity in any way disclosed. You will be free to discuss or withhold anything pertaining to questions posed by the student. Should your student interviewer feel that a direct quote of any of your responses would be especially beneficial to his/her study, your permission for this would be asked during the interview. Your contact with the student would involve one interview of approximately one and a half hours to be arranged at your convenience. There will be no follow-up to the interview.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

As your participation in this study is voluntary and your responses to the non-invasive questions that will be asked will not be connected with your name or name of employing agency, there are no foreseeable risks to you from your participation. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or decrease in benefits to which you are otherwise entitled and you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

The benefits to your participation are the satisfaction from helping a graduate social work student progress in his/her work toward the MSW degree and having an experience that previous social workers have found to be a helpful and supportive one.

Alternatives to Participating in this Study:

There are no alternatives to participating in this study.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota Duluth. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), contact Mike Raschick, Department of Social Work, University of Minnesota Duluth 218.726.7642 or mraschic@d.umn.edu.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature of Investigator _____ Date _____

Human Subjects Code Number: **0301S4002**