Assignment Sheet

Modified Personal Practice Model Paper

Objectives:

(1) To provide an introspective experience that helps students clarify “natural helping skills” and “personal values” they bring to social work practice.

(2) To exercise written communication (self expression) and expository skills.

(3) To provide exposure to the Personal Practice Model as a Master’s Project option, and to create an actual Portfolio learning product for those completing the Portfolio Masters Project

Assignment:

Read the PPM Manual available on the social work website:
http://www.d.umn.edu/sw/MANUALS/MSWDepartmentHandbooks.htm

Your paper will be focused upon the following portions of the PPM Manual:

**Natural Helping Skills (NHS)**

...Your natural helping skills (NHS) 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. (PPM, page 5)

In this paper you should comment on the following five NHS categories: **Empathy; Role-Modeling; Provider of Concrete Assistance; Self-sharing; Offering Positive Regard; Advocate.** Under each of these headings, you will describe how this skill has been a part of your life and work. Give concrete examples, tell stories, talk about important influences, role models or formative experiences in developing the skill. Each section should be a “rich description” from your experience. This is meant to be your unique expression of each skill, not an ideal definition of the skill.

After you have described each skill, you will provide an informal evaluation of the relative importance of each skill as follows:

On a scale of 1-4 indicate how effective you have been at using this skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effectiveness</th>
<th>Extent of Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slight/no Effectiveness</td>
<td>Rarely Used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Effective</td>
<td>Often Used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Effective</td>
<td>Fairly Frequently Used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Strongly Effective</td>
<td>Frequently Used</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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.
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. Sometimes values held by the profession for their clients are referred to as “rights” although rights and values are not necessarily synonymous. Some of the dominate 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 may 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.

(PPM page 7)

**Paper format:**
- Two main sections as described above, with clearly delineated subsections covering the assigned material.
- Typed in Word, 12 point Times New Roman font. (I’ll send it back if it’s not in this format.)
- APA format See Social Work website for APA resources
- Length 8-10 pages approximately. Take the space you need to do a quality paper.
- This paper will be a portfolio work product, for those selecting Portfolio as a master’s project.