



Social work Practices with Older People: Responsibilities and Role of Social worker Towards Development of Older People.

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Abstract

This paper highlights the Importance of social worker in geriatric to development of elderly people. The phenomenon of population ageing is becoming a major concern all over the world. According to Population Census 2011 there are nearly 104 million elderly persons (aged 60 years or above) in India; 53 million females and 51 million males. A report released by the United Nations Population Fund and HelpAge India suggests that the number of elderly persons is expected to grow to 173 million by 2026. (Census 2011, Government of India). In India many Non-Government organisations are working to the development of older people through social worker. This article is going to discuss about the role of social work with elderly.

Key words: Social work, Social work practices, Responsibilities, Role of social worker

Introduction:

Social work is the helping profession. The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet basic and complex needs of all people, with a particular focus on those who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty including elderly people. In India, generally people above 60 are considered to be elderly. Though the elderly are impressed by the developments in society, they are equally depressed by the effects of industrialization, migration, urbanisation and westernization in the value system. Their value systems, healthy habits, strong opinions, fruitful life time experiences are significant marks of healthy aging (Pennsylvania Department of Aging, 2008). The population in India is greying in larger number than before because of various indicators including increased life expectancy. In India, 5 percent of the population is between 65-70 years of age. (Kumar, 2008) Older adults may be dealing with complex physical and/or mental health conditions which can lead to needs for assistance with homemaking, personal care assistance and transportation, long term care planning, financial and legal assistance (Schneider & Kropf, 1992; Berkman, Gardner, Zodikoff, Harootyan, 2005). Social work has working with elderly to the overall development of elderly.

Objectives of the Study

1. To understand social work practices and responsibilities of social worker.

2. To examine the role of social worker in development of elderly people.

Methodology

Explorative research methodology has been used to find out the responsibilities of social worker and social work practices with older people. The present study is based on secondary source, online journals and self-observations to comprehend and analyse the new wave of the social work practices and role of social work in geriatric setting.

What is Social work practices with older people?

Social work is a division of social work concerned with the welfare of the elderly. Geriatric social workers try to improve the quality of life for senior citizens and help alleviate some of the negative aspects of the aging.

History of Social work in India

Many individuals gave contribution and inspired Indian people to do reformation in past days are following:-Raja Ram Mohan Roy sowed the seed of social and religious reform in his work for the abolition of Sati, in addition to supporting widow remarriage and women's education. Iswar Chandra Vidya Sagar also advocated for widow remarriage and women's education, as well as economic self-reliance and an end to polygamy. Gopal Hari Deshmukh promoted the establishment of dispensaries, maternity homes, and orphanages. M.K. Gandhi worked tirelessly for the upliftment of women and Dalits when, alongside his fight for freedom from foreign rule, he also fought for freedom from social evils. Mother Theresa had worked for the destitute. Saint Ignatius walked all over south India for the welfare of the people. According to Sanjay Bhattacharya [2003] In the former days helping the society took place through religious institutions, charity, mutual aid, social support network, state assistance and kinship. It also mentions that the protestant missionary named Cliffort Marshal came to India 1925. He had established sir Dorabji Tata School of Social Work which gave professional training. The trained social workers started to spread and practice in all sectors. Thus the school of social work started to emerge in different venues of the country and started to spread its concentrations in vivid fields.

Responsibilities of social worker

1. Psychosocial Assessments

Gerontological social workers conduct psychosocial assessments to determine their clients' mental, emotional and social needs, and to understand how these needs connect with their physical health and medical conditions. Mental and physical health are closely linked, and by gaining a holistic picture of clients' mental, emotional and social circumstances, social workers help clients' medical care providers and their families better understand how to develop a care plan as comprehensive and compassionate as possible.

2. Counseling and Therapy

Gerontological social workers provide counseling and therapy to clients to help them cope with the psychological, emotional, social and financial challenges that come with aging. They also provide therapy and advice clients' families and loved ones as necessary. During sessions with clients, social workers may employ a

variety of psychotherapeutic techniques to help them manage negative emotions, set objectives for life improvement, address behavioral problems or psychological barriers to meeting certain goals, and (where applicable) make end-of-life preparations.

3. Crisis Management and Interventions

Gerontological social workers may encounter a variety of client crises. Some clients may struggle with depression, suicidal desires, acute dementia that renders them unable to care for themselves, family conflicts about treatment decisions, traumatic experiences that require immediate support, or mental or emotional disorders that pose a danger to themselves or others. Clients may also be the victims of neglect, domestic abuse, exploitation and other crimes.

In these instances, gerontological social workers may have to intervene with a number of measures to ensure client safety and well-being. These may include providing emotional support and counseling to clients and their family members; managing difficult conversations among client, family and care providers; contacting relevant organizations and/or authorities in the case of elder abuse; and developing a short- and long-term support plan for clients and their loved ones.

4. Clinical interventions

They may provide therapy for an elderly client who feels lonely or who is suffering depression, isolation neglect or anxiety. Geriatric social workers encourage their clients to pursue stimulating activities, helping to arrange group outings. They can help clients cope with aging by recording “life stories” and help people say their goodbyes through writing letters, phone calls, videos, etc.

5. Service interventions

Many social workers act as a link between their clients and the numerous public and private programs designed for the aging. Social workers help clients apply for appropriate services. They help sort out any problems in the delivery of these services.

6. Advocacy

A geriatric social worker can provide an older adult with an Advance Directive form and explain how to correctly complete it. They are also a frontline defence for stopping elder abuse. A geriatric social worker is mandated by law to report any suspected elder abuse to Adult Protective Services.

Role of social worker in Development of older people

Social work with elderly focuses on the conservation and development of performance and of excellence of living. Through the focus on elderly care and the capacity to believe the difficulty involved from different perspective, social workers suggest a exceptional and precious role in this pasture by provided that suitable and besieged army to meet the multidimensional desires of elderly and their families. Social work assessments and interventions are not only of enormous assistance to the client, but to the decision -making capacities of other professionals.

1. Provide assessment, counseling, and referral services regarding health promotion in clinical and multidisciplinary settings to the development of older people.

2. Educating the elderly people about healthcare services and specialities which are given by government and NGOs.
3. Promote health-seeking behaviour in elderly and the family members because they can avail through “Health as a Right”.
4. Running an awareness campaign for the aged regarding balanced, nutritious, regular, timely and easily digestible diet/food. Insisting on diet consultation occasionally in the communities.
5. Creating awareness about suitable eating habits and the importance of inculcating healthy food habits in the young age itself to dismantle the ill health impact in subsequent stages of life.
6. Engage in senior help Line or hot line Service throughout India for instant assistance
7. The National Old Age Pension Scheme needs reforms in its philosophy as well as machinery. Here, the social workers may act as a bridge between government schemes and the needy, aged by creating awareness and helping them in advocacy programme related to availing this scheme.
8. Starting a strong nationwide School Education Programme that focuses on bringing children closer to the aged and coordinate schools children visits to old age homes to bridge up generational gap.
9. Improve the competence of communities to develop strategies for helping older adults define and reach their goals.
10. Encourage better use of available resources and giving health education the aging persons.

Conclusion

The study reveals that Social workers are connected to elderly care in both government and non-government organization. social worker with older people rely on similar assessment approaches for casework and family work and rely on the same essential social work skills as social workers in geriatric settings. Finally I would like to say that only social worker will work on development of elderly because social work skills and techniques will help him to give specialities to the needy people towards development of older people.

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