



COMPONENTS OF SOCIAL CASE WORK



The Background

- Social case work is a complex, dynamic, and evolving phenomenon.
- It is complex by virtue of the varied knowledge which feed it, the ethical commitments which infuse it, the special auspices and conditions of its practice, the objectives and ends which guide it, the skills which empower it.
- It is complicated by the fact that it deals with materials which are in interaction and change among themselves and also in response to the interaction of case work itself.
- As it is experienced, practiced, or thought about, the social case work is a living event.



The Background

- Case work is both social and psychological.
- The term "social" implies which involves more than one person; the term "psychological" is that which takes place within an individual.
- Since the individual does not live in a vacuum, the content of much of his inner experience is "psycho-social."
- There is no real dichotomy between the social and the psychological.
- The nucleus of the case work event is this: a person with a problem comes to a place where a professional representative helps him by a given process.



The Components of Social Case Work

The 4 P's



1

The Person

2

The Problem

3

The Place

4

The Process



THE PERSON



The Person

- The person is a man, woman or child or anyone who finds himself/herself, or is found to be, in need of help in some aspect of his social-emotional living, whether the need be for tangible provisions or counsel. As he/she begins to receive help, he/she is called a “client”.
- **The process** a person goes through in seeking help or becoming a client (David Landy)
 1. The help seeker must decide something is wrong.
 2. The help seeker must face the probability that family, friends and neighbours will know of his disability.
 3. The help seeker must decide to admit to a helper he is in distress, failed or is not capable of handling his own problem.
 4. The help seeker must decide to surrender enough sovereignty and autonomy to place himself in a dependency role.
 5. The help seeker must decide to direct his search for help among persons and resources known to him.
 6. The help seeker must decide to take time off a job or from other responsibilities to receive help.
 7. The help seeker may realize that in receiving help relationship with others may be threatened.



- The person seeking help brings to the helping situation **concerns, needs and problems.**
- He/She comes from a societal and cultural milieu, a set of life experiences, and a set of transactions with other person's that make the person **unique yet sharing the commonalities of humankind.**
- The **client role** calls for **active participation in the helping endeavor**, which includes furnishing appropriate information to inform the decision making process, participation in the decision-making process to the limits of the clients ability and capacity, and the carrying put of the mutually agreed upon tasks.



Types of Clients

1. Those who ask for appropriate help for themselves.
2. Those who ask for help for another person or system.
3. Those who do not seek help but are in some way blocking or threatening the social functioning of another person (e.g., the neglectful parent in a child protection case).
4. Those who seek or use help as a means to reach their own goals or ends.
5. Those who seek help but for inappropriate goals.

Identification of clients type is the first step in the delivery of service, for the worker-client relationship and interaction will vary depending on the type of client and the nature of help sought.



Seven Needs of Clients as they Come to the Helping Situation (Felix Biestik)

1. To be dealt with as an individual rather than a type or category.
2. To express feelings; both positive and negative.
3. To be accepted as a person of worth, a person with innate dignity.
4. Sympathetic understanding of and response to feelings expressed.
5. To be neither judged nor condemned for the difficulty in which the clients finds himself.
6. To make own choices and decisions concerning one's own life.
7. To help keep confidential information about self as secret as possible.



The Nature of the Person

- The client is a person with both **needs and a problem(s)**.
- The person's behaviour has this purpose and meaning to gain satisfaction, to avoid and dissolve frustration and to maintain his/her balance- in- movement.
 - Personality Structure: Id, Ego Superego by Sigmund Freud
- A person at any stage of his/her life is not only “a product” of nature but is also and always “in process” of **being** in the present and **becoming** in the future.
- Those physical, social and interpersonal situations he encounters in his/her operations today will have an impact upon him/her and can affect his/her development either morbidly or benignly.



- Before a person seeks help from a social agency, he/she has usually attempted to deal with a problem in a way that has worked with previous problems commonly known as "**coping**".
- Coping results not only in solving problems but in the reduction of tension and anxiety.
- If the coping is not successful, a person may then turn to his or her natural support system ,that is, friends, relatives, associates etc.
- Thus, individuals often come to the agency after a period of **unsuccessful attempts to deal with their problems**.



THE PROBLEM



2. The Problem

- A problem is a “question or situation that presents uncertainty, perplexity or difficulty”
- Problems are frequent and unexpected in the human situation, and solutions are usually found without professional help.
- The concern of social work are those problems in which persons cannot fulfil the needs with their own resources.
- Problem in social work usage refers to a social-functioning situation in which need fulfilment of any of the persons or systems involved is blocked or has a significant potential of blockage, and in which the person involved cannot by themselves remove the block to need fulfilment.



- The problems within the purview of social case work are those which vitally affect a person's social functioning.
- The problem may be some unmet needs-economic, medical, educational, recreational- which hampers or undermines a person's adequate living. Or it may be one of stress psychological, social, physical- which causes the person to be ineffective or disturbed in carrying his/ her social roles.
- In order to work out a problem, one must first understand it, comprehend it and be oriented too
- In the attempt to understand any problem, there must be some analysis of it, some translation into other familiar terms, some sets of associations which can be brought to it.
- This is the way case worker function when they are confronted with a problem. They must come to the point where they can see through it.



Dimensions of how a problem arises

1. The problem arises from some need or obstacle or accumulation of frustrations or maladjustments and sometimes all of these together which threatens or has already attacked the adequacy of the person's to deal with it.
2. The social-functioning problem may rest in interpersonal relationships; for example, the inability of a parent to understand an adolescent child's need and thus, is so strict that the relationship between parent and child is at the point where there is open rebellion and an inability to discuss the situation
3. The problem may rest in an inability to negotiate with systems in the environment for e.g., a patient in a hospital is unable to ask the doctor the questions that are bothering the patient or to make his/her concerns known to the doctor.



4. The problem may rest in inadequate or inappropriate role performance; for example, the parent does not meet the nutritional needs of the child or maintain a suitable home for that child.
5. One may not have the preparation needed to carry out a social role. For example, the mother who did not have adequate mothering as a child and has received no instruction in childcare may not be able to properly care for her child
6. May be due to disturbances or disorder resulting in intrapsychic turmoil, constriction or distortion. For e.g. the person may be mentally ill or have some perpetual difficulties which result in using inappropriate or ineffective means for coping with life situations.



7. May be there is discrepancies between expectations of a person and the demands of various segments of that person's environment. For example, an individual expects that food, clothing and shelter will be provided by a social agency without work on his/her part, but the agency can only provide partially for those needs.
8. Problems may arise due to discrepancies between environmental demands and personal needs. For example, a teenage girl whose mother is ill is expected to care for younger siblings, but she needs time for completing her education and for socialization with her peers.



Characteristics of a Client's Problem

1. The problems within the purview of social case work are those which vitally affect a persons social functioning.
2. The multifaceted and dynamic nature of the client's problem makes necessary the selection by the case worker and client of some part of it as the unit for work. Three main considerations enter into the choice of problem focus:
 - what the client wants
 - what the case worker's professional judgment's points to as possible and desirable solutions
 - What the agency is for and can offer.



3. Problems in any part of a human beings living tend to have “chain reaction.”
4. Any problem which a person encounters has both an objective and a subjective significance. A problem may be seen and understood by an onlooker; it is felt by its carrier, and it is experienced with the particularity of individual difference.
5. Not only do the external (objective) and internal (subjective) aspects of the problem co-exist, but either one may be the cause of the other.



THE PLACE



The Place

- The place is a social service agency or a social service department of another kind of human welfare agency.
- The place to which the person comes for help with his/ her problem is known as a social agency.
- It refers to the institution within which the case worker practices; sometimes it is the larger institution that is intended (e.g. the local authority) and at other times it is the smaller social work microcosm (e.g. the psychiatric social work department in a mental hospital).
- The institutions in which case workers practice (schools, child guidance clinics, etc.) have all been established to achieve certain broad social purposes and case workers have a part to play in achieving them.



Three major classifications of Agencies

1. ***Their source of support*** - public taxation (child welfare, physical and mental health programmes etc) or voluntary contribution.
2. ***Their source of professional authority*** – primary agencies carry full authority and responsibility for their social functions and secondary agencies derive their authority and responsibility from the host agency.
3. ***Their special function and area of concern*** - primary agencies both public and private, may define certain areas of social need as the particular fielding in which they give services. Secondary, case work help is related to the work of some other profession, such as medicine, education or law and to its specific knowledge and purpose.



Characteristics of an Agency (Perlman)

- The social agency is an organization fashioned to express the will of a society or of some group in that society. An agency ***embodies a society's decision to protect its members*** against social breakdowns, to prevent their maladjustments and/or to promote the development of better or higher levels of humans functioning.
- Each social agency ***develops a programme by which to meet the particular areas of need*** with which it sets out to deal.
- The social ***agency has a structure*** by which it organizes and delegates its responsibilities and tasks, and governing policies and procedures by which it stabilizes and systematizes its operationsstructure, as it may be depicted on an organizational chart, is the agency's anatomy.



- The ***social agency is a living, adaptable organism*** susceptible to being understood and changed, much as other living organisms.
 - agency structure- anatomy
 - operations-physiology
 - purposes, attitudes, and goal directions- psychology
- ***Every staff member in an agency speaks and acts for some part of the agency's function***, and the case worker represents the agency in its individualized problem-solving help
- ***The case worker, while representing his/her agency, is first and foremost a representative of his/her profession***. He/she should maintain “social-conscience” and maintain ethical conduct in all his/her professional transactions.



THE PROCESS



The Process

- The process, is a **progressive transaction** between the professional helper (the case worker) and the client. It consists of a **series of problem solving operations** carried out within a **meaningful relationship**.
- The end of this process is contained in its means: to influence the client person that he/she develops effectiveness in coping with his/her problem and /or to so influence the problem as to resolve it or reduce its effects.
- “Process refers to the recurrent patterning of a sequence of change over time and in a particular direction.” (Sal Hofstein)
- **Three qualities of process:**
 - 1) recurrent patterning or stages
 - 2) takes place over time
 - 3) in a particular direction (the process is irreversible).



The means to facilitate the process

1. The provision of a therapeutic relationship
2. The provision of a systematic and flexible way
3. Provision of opportunities and aids.



In order to understand ***what the case work process must include in its problem-solving help***, the blockings which occur in people's normal problem-solving effort should be understood. These six are among the most common:

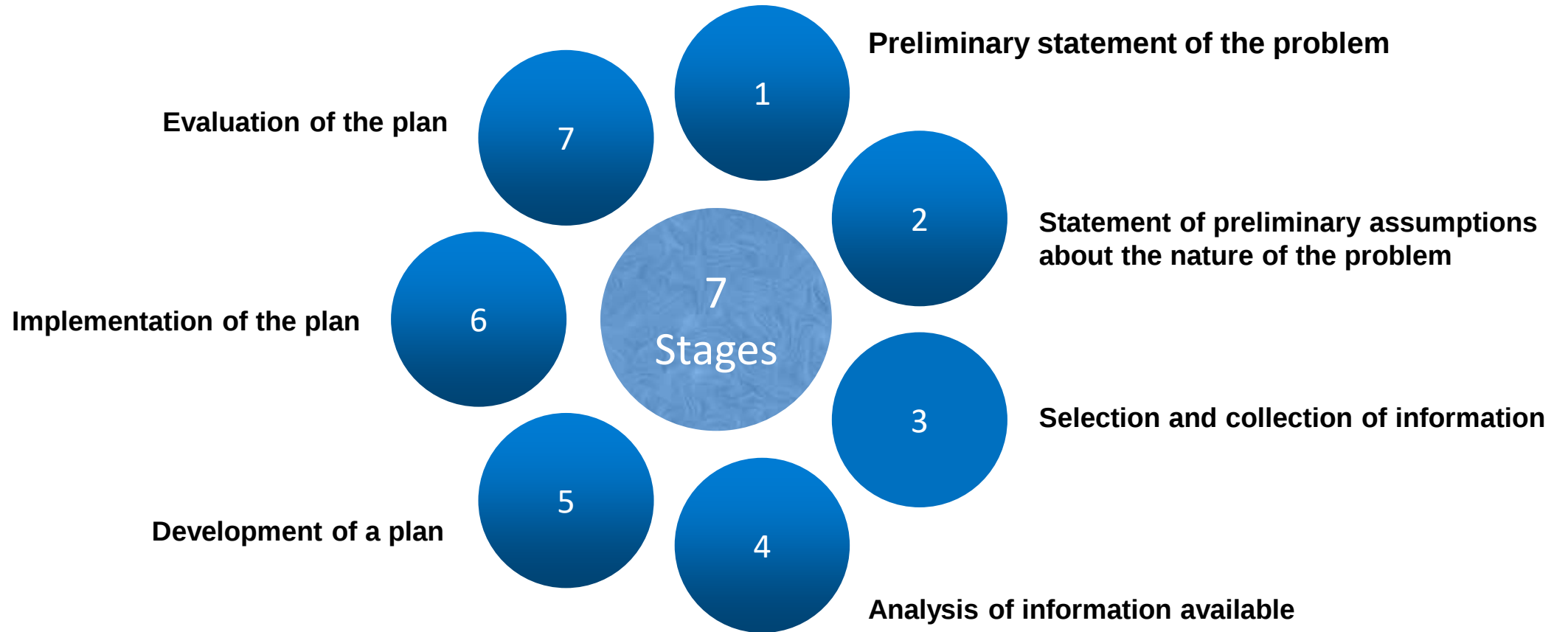
1. A problem cannot be solved if the necessary tangible means and resources are not available to the person.
2. Sometimes, people are unable to solve their problems simply out of ignorance or misapprehension
3. A problem is difficult of resolution when the person who has depleted or drained of emotional or physical energy.



4. When problems sets off a conflagration of feeling, a person's thought processes become clouded and tumbled about.
5. The problem may lie within the person: i.e, he/she may have become subject to, or victim of, emotions that chronically, over a long time have governed his/ her thinking and action.
6. Some people find problems in solving a difficult situation because they have never developed systematic habits of orderly methods of thinking and planning.



Stages of Problem-Solving Process





1. Preliminary statement of the problem

- A clear statement of the problem is necessary before proceeding to subsequent steps.
- Often, problem statement tends to be vague and lack precision.
- For example, school dropouts or unwed mothers are often referred to as problems. A more adequate formulation in the area of unwed mothers might be: lack of educational resources for teenage pregnant girls.
- In this statement, the need of the individual and society is education.



2. Statement of preliminary assumptions about the nature of the problem

- This step is necessary to help make explicit the type of information needed for understanding and planning.
- As the problem is stated, implicit assumptions are made about its nature and cause, which provide indications as to the need in the situation and as to the block to need fulfillment.



3. Selection and collection of information

- Selection and collection of information-Sources for information should include a variety of perspectives that may be chosen from historical, social-psychological, biological, economic, political, religious, and ethical understandings.
- Both the facts of the problem itself and the meaning of the problem to those concerned are important.
- Skill in the collection of information also calls for skill in communication and social interaction with persons who are sources of the information.
- The values of social work call for the client to be a primary source.
- There is a need to determine and accumulate relevant evidence about the situation, and this evidence needs to be related to the salient features of the situation.



4. Analysis of information available

- Analysis of information is influenced and directed by the purpose for which the analysis is to be used.
- The purposes include determination of feasible goals and possible outcomes and of possible plans of action, interpretation of the meaning of the information gathered, and evaluation.
- The cyclical nature of the process becomes very apparent, for one returns to analysis as an ingredient of each step of the process.
- The carrying out of the process generates new information.



5. Development of a plan

- Information and its analysis lead to understanding of what can be done to remove obstacles blocking need fulfillment.
- A social worker uses assessment in developing a plan of action.
- Plans develop from a consideration of a variety of possible strategies and techniques.
- As a plan becomes more specific, the social worker will return to early steps in the process to gather and analyze new information needed for the specifics of planning.
- Consideration of a variety of plans is important in creative planning.



6. Implementation of the plan

- In social work, implementation involves interaction between people and is interventive in nature.
- It is action based on thinking that has its source in feelings about concern or need.
- In addition, it is action based on substantial knowledge from many sources that explain and predict behaviour of persons in the situation.



Evaluation of the plan

- This step may result in redefinition of the problem, expanded information gathering and analysis, of reformulation of the plan.
- If the goal has been reached, evaluation is an appropriate and necessary climax to the process.
- Regardless of the outcome of the plan, evaluation of what happened can lead to an understanding that can be transferred to other situations and to more effective problem solving in those situations.



Three essential operations of problem-solving process

1. The facts that constitute and bear upon the problem must be ascertained and grasped. Such facts may be of objective reality and of subjective reaction, of cause and effect, of relatedness between the person and his/her problems, of the solution sought and of the actual means available;
2. The facts must be thought about. The facts must be played upon and organized by ideas-ideas springing from knowledge and experience and subject to the governing aim of problem solution;
3. Some choice or decision must be made that is the end result of the consideration of the particular facts and that affects or has the intent of resolving the problem.



The process can be conceptualized as having four major components

1. Assessment
2. Planning
3. Action
4. Termination.



Casework in a Nutshell

- The aim of case work process is to engage the client with his/her problem and his/her will to do something about it in a working relationship with the agency, its intentions and special means of helpfulness.
- The context of the process is a fairly constant one, and its method is a fairly systematic one-as constant and as systematic as a process keyed to living, feeling, changing human beings can be-while it yet remains fluid and flexible.



THANK YOU