Social Work in the Canadian Society

Social work is a profession that deals with the assistance of persons, families, communities or groups in order to enhance their individual as well as collective well-being. The aim of social work is to ensure that people have the skills and abilities to use their own resources or those placed at their disposal by the community in order to deal with their day to day problems. Social work values include solving problems, human rights, social justice, empowerment, enhancement of well-being. It is, therefore, important to note that the work of a social worker is to shield vulnerable people, help in the development of relationships and helping families to be able to stay together. According to Hick (2010), social workers help support people with the aim of helping them live a happy life.

Social worker and child support and protection

It is the role of the social worker to ensure the protection of children. According to Hick (2010), child support can be provided through family support in order to maintain healthy families. The other way is through the protection of children who are at risk by ensuring that they are removed from their homes and provided with another form of care. Child placement also comes as the role of the social worker in making sure children withdrawn from their homes are provided with substitute care such as adoption as well as foster parenting. In particular, Hick (2010) argues that in Canada today, the number of aboriginal children in care has been on the rise. This makes the author argue that there is a need to deal with structural reasons as to why the Aboriginal children are taken into care. These problems include poverty, lack of employment and lack of education. Diversity is, therefore, one of the main things that have to be considered when dealing with children from different backgrounds as the Aboriginal people are the only ones who can be in a position to make a decision regarding their children. As a social worker, Hick (2010) argues that a social worker has to be aware of some of the challenges faced by children who need protection. These include neglect regarding deprivation of food, clothing, hygiene, shelter as well as other needs that might cause psychological harm. Physical abuse is the other form of child abuse, which includes physical assaults leading to physical injury. Sexual abuse also counts as one of the major issues faced by children. Emotional abuse can also cause psychological harm to a child if the parents do not take any interest in the child (Hick, 2010). As a social worker, one has to be able to report cases of abuse on children to the relevant authorities. This is followed by an assessment of the risk that faces the child as well as the extent of abuse the child faces. It is important to note that child welfare is one of the difficult areas of social work and involves working in various roles. I as a social worker has to be able to conduct an assessment of a child abuse and be able to assist in making a decision on the right course of action.

One of the many challenges that social workers have to deal with is the concept of diversity. As a social worker, it is important to recognize and respect the diversity that exists in the Canadian society. This is based on some of the differences that exist between individuals, families or communities. Canada is a largely diverse society that has many cultural differences. Cultural differences exist regarding the historical information in the sense that a certain community has a different history as compared to the other. The social structure is another concept that exists as a result of cultural differences. For example, the social structure and the social identity of the Aboriginal people are different from that of rest of the Canadian population. This means that as social worker ought to fully understand the concept of social structure and social identity in order to be able to work fully in harmony with the community in question. Gender roles also manifest themselves differently in every society. This means that I as a social worker has to make sure that I fully equip myself with the cultures of the target community to avoid offending them in one way or another.

The importance of assessment to intervention in social work cannot be underestimated. The first thing in social work assessment is to start by defining the problem before planning the intervention. For example, if one is working in a children protection facility, one has to be able to conduct organizational assessment in order to be able to establish organizational goals and be able to analyze when a child is supposed to be taken away from his or her parents in case of abuse.

Social work and health

There has been a major role played by social workers in medical social work practice. The hospital is one of the areas where social workers are mostly relevant. For example, they are found in emergency services, surgery, intensive care as well as the orthopedics. These social workers have various roles that have received a lot of emphasis in the recent times. These roles arise from the fact that people are becoming more aware that illness is affected by both the social and the environmental factors. This means that both preventive and educational approaches are not only effective but also cost effective (Hick, 2010 pg. 182). For this reason, social workers play a major role in discharge planning to make sure that the patients are discharged in a timely manner. For example, a person who has taken a lot of time in hospitals may find it hard to return back into the society. On the same note, there are some of the things that must be setup before the patient has left hospital. These include setting up the home care services as well as dealing with some of the complication that may arise if the person had addiction issues or if the person is homeless. On the same note, I find the role of social workers important especially in ensuring holistic approach to healthcare. The holistic aspect of health takes into account the social, mental, cultural as well as spiritual aspects of health coupled with the physical aspect of life. It is my belief that social workers are able to bring in expertise and training especially when it comes to the social determinants of health that has the power to impact the quality of people’s lives as well as the outcomes of their healthcare. As a social worker, I feel that it is my role to work directly with the patients and be able to advocate on behalf of the patients by ensuring that they have financial support, houses and a good connection with both the family and the agencies found in the community. What Hick (2010) puts across is that there is a considerable percentage of spending that goes towards the social aspect of health. This means that a social worker has a role to play in making sure that patients do not have the pressures that might lead to readmissions of the patients to hospitals. One of the activities of the social workers is to ensure that people remain in the community by making sure that they are feeding well. For example, research shows poor people are more likely to die as a result of some diseases despite them having access to quality healthcare. The implication is that social workers have to work with the poor people especially in areas such as access to food, mental support as well as in social well-being. Consequently, Hick (2010) points out that people of Aboriginal origin have lower life expectancy as compared to the Canadian general population. The low life expectancy of these people is mainly attributed to their social aspects of life. As social worker, it is important to be equipped with community assessment techniques in order to be able to help various member of the society putting into consideration the fact that Canada is a diverse society. Over the course of my studies, I have realized the importance of diversity in the modern society. There are various cultural differences that occur that might lead to culture shock, which class for the social worker to be fully aware of the client’s culture if the client is to gain anything from the association with the social worker.

One of the things that I resonate well with is the role that social workers play in hospice care in helping reduce the severity of the diseases instead of providing a cure. For example, a social worker may work effectively with cancer patients who are at the end of life. This will not only relieve them of the pain but will also provide social, emotional and spiritual support. On the same note, it is important to note that social workers have a role to play in reducing the distress that family members have when they are providing care to a person who is at the end of life. This comfort and relief help patients to manage their symptoms well in case they are dealing with terminal illnesses. Hick (2010) also points out that the role of social workers in health is wide as it cuts across all the health sectors in the society. For example, social workers have a role to play when it comes to mental health. As a social worker working with people with mental disorders, it is my role to liaise with family members and ensure that right course of action is taken towards helping the patient deal with his condition. As a social worker, it is important to act as an advocate who encourages public action as well as commitment towards ensuring that the community is committed towards strengthening the mental health services. Social workers in particular reduce the stigmatization and the labeling that is associated with mental illnesses. Providing support to those dealing with mental disorders helps in speeding up their recovery ensuring that they are able to return to productive members of the society.

A social worker not only has a role in helping children, or  the sick but also has a role in helping women. Hick (2010) in Chapter 10 argues that there is need to make sure that issues affecting women are dealt with amicably in order to cement their place in the society. For example, the author argues that for a long time, poverty and male domination have been some of the main issues that have hindered the development of women in the society. On the same note, sexual harassment and domestic violence have also affected women in the Canadian society for a long time. As a social worker, Hick (2010) the social worker should be able to intervene in a crisis in order to help women and reduce the extent of psychological torture that they go through. This is one of the areas where assessment is important as the social worker has to conduct an assessment of the danger facing a woman. Empowering women is also a role supposed to be played by a social worker in order to make sure that the victim is able to return back to being a productive member of society. The social worker should be able to connect a victimized woman to a support group where they can be able to share experiences. To my own understanding, the social worker should be able to teach or train a woman some of the techniques that she can use to assess the potential for violence in the family. As a social worker, it is my role to make sure that I have referred children drawn from a violent or abusive family to protective services while at the same time advising the abused women on some of the legal measures they can take to protect themselves from future abuse or victimization. Moreover, I find it important for social worker to help women living with various chronic diseases such as Aids as well those dealing with poverty.

Social work also entails dealing with issues pertaining to gender identity. According to Hick (2010), the Queer theory argues that sexual and gender identity liberation cannot occur as a result of the legislation as they are social constraints. The implication is that a social worker should be able to create an environment where people with various sexual orientations can be able to gain the help they need. One of the way s that this can be done is through counseling.

Personally, I was moved towards social work by the desire to help people living with disabilities. These people have a high desire to live and make it life despite the challenges that they go through. Canada has been in the forefront in enacting legislations meant to improve the lives of those living with disabilities. For a social worker, understanding the legal rights of the people living with disabilities is important as the major step towards helping them. On the same  note, it is important to remove the stigma associated with disabilities by most members of the society. Understanding the extent of the disability is important in order to be able to help families in dealing with the disability of one of their own. The social worker provides counseling to family members on some of the ways that they can improve the well-being of the person with disability. It requires time and patience to find the proper approach towards each case and maintain a normal contact with the patient in order to make a communication productive.

However, Hick (2010) points out that a social worker has to deal with some barriers that prevent them from achieving their goals. For example, cultural barriers for instance are one of the stumbling block especially in a diverse society. People of Aboriginal origin for instance have a different culture and social structure as compared to the general Canadian population. Language is sometimes an issue for the social workers especially when dealing with immigrants or people who do not have English or French as their first language. Religion also pose a threat to social work as some of the thoughts, beliefs and practices of some people are entrenched in the religion. For example, some homophobic utterances by people against the LGBTQ community may be drawn from religion. However, it is important for the social worker to strive for the creation of a Queer theory scenario in the society where most of the things are seen as a social construct that can be dealt with based in a social manner.