

Introduction to Human services

Final examine

#1 Jeffrey, "A Human Services Professional is someone who is a facilitator for someone who is not able or not yet able to deal with issues in a healthy way. I am taking classes so that I can learn how to best help empower people change their situation by believing in themselves. I believe that people have the answers within themselves, but may need help getting in touch with their spiritual or intuitive self. As human services providers, we hopefully strive to model healthy behavior, including the fact that we are human, need support from our peers, and can make mistakes."

"When a client is ready, we educate them to give them an idea of what is destructive behavior, bring to their attention possible consequences of their actions, and suggest ideas or alternatives. Usually a client already knows all this, they just never knew a better way or thought their way of dealing with life was normal. I work on accepting each person where they are in their life, which takes strength. I may be saying in my mind, 'Can't you see your way out of the prison you're in?', but then I remember that I used to be in the same place, and it took years to find my way out. I still struggle with my addiction, and it still affects me, just not so profoundly."

"What I would like to do is work with teenagers. As a teenager, I was befriended by a Young Life leader. He was a man in his 40's and didn't want anything from me but to be my friend. When I drank beer at lunch, he didn't tell me to not drink. I don't remember his words so much as the feeling I got when we were together. He was like a father/friend to me. He seemed to care about me unconditionally. He looked at me like a real human person, which made me uncomfortable, which now looking back, was probably because I wasn't used to that. My own father lived in the same house with me, but he was not emotionally available to me. My own father seemed to think that all women are good for is sex and housekeeping. That scares me when I think of that now. My first husband thought of me only as good for sex, baby making, and housekeeping. I am grateful that I have wised up since then.

My passion is to work in the alternative schools as a tutor or mentor, to help give kids some kind of an idea what life can be about. I may not see results right away, but I do believe that 'being there' for kids is an investment. They may not realize until years later as I did, that someone had a positive affect on their lives."

2 One of my coworkers from Vietnam told me that in her country, the prisoners work for their food. I thought to myself, as I am sure many people have before, that we should try that here in this country. I do not think that sitting in prison really helps anybody. I have heard that there are work camps where the inmates learn a skill or trade so that when the inmates are released into society, they at least have marketable job skills working in their favor.

I think community service should be required as an alternative to jail or prison in some cases. Picking up garbage may seem demeaning, but I know of a city employee who makes a good salary picking up garbage around my neighborhood. Maybe if the people who threw the garbage on the ground had to pick it up, they would care.

Taking classes, GED or college, is popular in prison also. I have a friend who learned computer skills in prison and is now working toward a degree in computer engineering. He is grateful he had the opportunity to take college classes in prison, otherwise he may have never found out how much he enjoys programming computers. It seems to help his self esteem, because he seems gifted in this area and people often ask for his help and advice concerning computers.

I suppose that providing housing for convicted criminals would not cost more than incarceration. It does not seem that imprisonment is much of a deterrent to crime. A Settlement House may seem idealistic, but is more feasible than some may think. Sex offenders are often released into the community. A new program has

been implemented in which parole officers and police officers regularly visit released offenders. A step in the right direction was made when our community invited a psychologist from a sex offender treatment facility to educate us about this population, rather than ignoring the problem and hoping it will go away. The psychologist told us that serious offenders are psychopathic; they do not know and do not care what is right and wrong, nor do they care who they hurt. They have no feelings or emotions. Even so, I do not think that terrorizing or intimidating released sex offenders, as I have heard of in some cities, helps anybody.

I think many criminals would be better off with the awareness and support of the community. It is often difficult for former prison inmates to find shelter, and a transitional community setting may help resolve many problems. I have wondered if support from the community would help some offenders. Sometimes people fall into addictions because of something missing in his or her life. If we combine resources of therapy, job training, supervision, and community involvement, maybe we would see some positive changes. It certainly wouldn't hurt to be more open minded.

3 Children in grade school used to say I was weird. I eventually realized that my way of thinking is different from that of many people. In high school I would verbally express my thoughts and people would say to me with amazement, "I have never met a person like you." I guess some of my ideas and thoughts were quite creative and abstract. I like to think of myself as eccentric. Now that I am older, I tell myself that only narrow minded people would think I am strange. I used to feel like I was born in the wrong century or wrong country. A positive aspect is that my way of thinking allows me to be sensitive and open minded. I know how it feels to feel out of place. Not just in a group of people, but in this dimension we call "life on planet Earth". I have become proud of my nonconformity. My way thinking is, "Why be normal?"

What I have learned is to get in touch with my spiritual self. I can feel a connection with people on this level. Sometimes I feel threatened or uncomfortable with people because of the vibrations I feel from them. I think about how this will affect my career. Will I be afraid of someone for no tangible reason? Will I favor some people because of how I respond to them emotionally?

Being different sometimes makes people stronger. Sometimes it makes people suicidal. I have been to both places. I feel that because of situations I have been faced with, I can relate to people with a variety of challenges and help emotionally support them through tough times. Personally, I feel that I have survived by the grace of God. Some people think it is impossible to be saved by God, but they also told me they don't believe in God. This is interesting to me because I never believed in God until I received therapy for an addiction I am recovering from. It makes me wonder if God only blesses people who are begging for healing, as I was. I guess I was ready to accept a power greater than myself. As a human service provider, I hope that I can help people in some way, otherwise it is not worth it. I would like to think I haven't gone through all this stuff for nothing.

4 When I learned about Maslow's theory in my psychology class, it made sense to me because I have experienced self-actualization in my life. I experience more of what I call spiritual awareness every day. I believe that when a person feels he or she is in a safe environment, he can spend more time on personal growth and awareness instead of wasting energy defending himself.

Accepting people as a philosophy, I make a consciencious decision every time I communicate with people to be aware that what I see as a destructive behavior is most likely a mode of survival for them. Being addicted to something is a desperate hunger for wholeness. I think the process of life is so painful for some people, they opt for suicide. Death is seen as instant spiritual freedom and an end to human suffering. Emotional growth can be painful and can take a lot of strength. We gain strength from our experiences which makes us stronger for more growth. It is all a process. Sometimes the challenges are so overwhelming, we need the support and strength of someone who has experienced difficulties and

believes there will be a light at the end of the tunnel.

Learning about Erickson's theories helps me understand how people may pass through stages in life. I do think that many needs not met in childhood can be met later in life. I know someone who said he didn't need anybody and he was better on his own, but as I got to know him better, he told me that he gets lonely and is afraid of getting hurt. As a young child, he was sent to live with his grandmother because his stepfather was abusive. He felt guilty that he could not be there to protect his mother. Because of these experiences, he is very protective of his children and is very close to his mother. To protect himself from pain, he refused to become emotionally attached to someone unless he knew her well enough to know she would not abandon him. In my opinion, it would be therapeutic for him to be in a long-term relationship.

6 It's the 90's. Diversification is expected. Networking is important. When I worked in the Community College Wellness Center, I would visit some of the local agencies offering services. I would rather refer someone to an agency if I knew of its integrity. Not only is my credibility on the line, but I am not doing a client a favor by giving him or her a referral which may lead to disappointment.

In the 90's, there are more trained mental health professionals than ever before in the history of civilization. Therefore, we are each allowed to develop a specific skill rather than knowing a little of each area of need. From what I have read about history, people were first concerned about basic survival. Hopefully, by helping people meet basic needs, we can go beyond mere survival. It seems that people are seeking more meaning in their lives. I have read that a goal for a woman up to the 1960's, was to find a husband who would be a good provider and not abusive, but now women (and men) want intellectual stimulation, someone they can have an intelligent conversation with.

Marriage and family counselors are more acceptable now than when I was growing up. It used to be that people would be ashamed to admit they were even thinking about counseling, where now I here people almost bragging about it - learning to communicate with your family, if you did not grow up freely expressing your thoughts, feels wonderful.

I plan to learn more about my field before I call myself a specialist. Being able to work with teenagers will probably require me to be a specialist in several fields, including juvenile, domestic violence and chemical dependency. My goal is to receive a well rounded education. From the creativity and insight of teenagers to the wisdom and insight of senior citizens, my horizons are broadened when I converse with people from different backgrounds. Whether we are advocates, educators, or directors, we are each trained to use our individual talents to create a functional system of human service workers.

7 Get a job! Permanent birth control now mandated for every woman on the dole!

I admit, sometimes these thoughts cross my mind. But I am also one of these women. What began as my American Dream ended as quickly as it began. My husband was in the Navy. I thought I would live a life of adventure, see new places, meet new people. What really happened is that I ended up on an isolated military base, with a man who didn't really care about me or his child. Being that I have felt the need for independence from a man, I do not think there are any simple solutions such as 'stay married', or 'get a job'. In my opinion it is unfair to ask a mother of a baby to go to work and put her baby in a daycare. I think children should be four or five years of age before put in daycare.

Many populations are in need of assistance. Sometimes I envy the women who live in (). They drive Mazda Minivans, take up hobbies, and don't need to work. Sometimes I wonder how many are unhappily trapped in that life. They know they could be one day away from losing their children, their home, everything. When I think of drastic welfare reform, what scares me is the control someone can have over you when he knows that without him, you have nothing.

I consider myself a capitalist, but I can't but help think about CEOs who make salaries in the millions. And about disabled people who live on a few hundred a month.

I think opportunities for education should be funded. Without education, many people have no marketable skills to earn an adequate living.

10 It's not just a job, it's an adventure! In a job you'll get burned out. If you find a career you love, you will use a lot of energy, but the rewards will keep you motivated. At the public library, there are many books to give you ideas and help you decide on a career. I found a group of books in the Community College Library issued by the US Department of Labor in which the author suggests listing a few things you would be interested in doing as a career. I also found a set of four books called Encyclopedia of Careers and Vocational Guidance. Then decide which ideas would be a practical for you to earn a living.

If you have a gift or ability, it feels good to use it to help people. Volunteering is a good way to find out where your talents lie. I have been fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to be employed as a work-study student by several departments on my college campus. I found out by on the job experience what I love to do. Is it possible to go to school or receive on the job training? Sometimes where there is a will, there is a way. I know some people who manage apartments, therefore do not need to pay rent for a place to live. They receive financial aid and food stamps while they are in school.

What some people do is find out which professions are in demand, or will be in the future. These trends can be found in publications such as government statistical manuals.

If there is something you think you would like to explore, maybe you could talk to people who are willing to take the time to explain how they carry out their responsibilities for their work. Bring a list of questions so the person you are interviewing has an idea of what specific aspects of their career you are curious about. People who are happy with their careers are usually quite willing to talk about themselves in this way. I know someone who owns his own business. He began as a backyard mechanic and now ten years later runs a very successful auto repair shop. For him it means long hours, but he is very proud of his accomplishments. He says there is nothing like being your own boss.

