

**Generalist Application Paper**

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### **Description**

My first hypothetical scenario involves an elderly lady named Sarah who comes into the agency because of high stress levels due to not receiving proper healthcare. My second hypothetical scenario involves the Johnson family who came into the agency seeking more financial resources. Their insurance was denied due to them being in poverty, but their son needs to have surgery.

### **Methods**

I believe that using the knowledge of fields of practice could be beneficial for Sarah. Fields of practice are “broad areas in social work that address certain types of populations and needs” (Kirst-Ashman and Hull, 2018). Social workers need information about the different people who need help within different populations and environments. Therefore, the social worker could evaluate Sarah’s needs by looking more into her background. Another important concept in fields of practice is that social workers need to know what resources are available to help meet people’s needs from each area. Providing Sarah with resources related to her problem with not receiving proper healthcare could be extremely beneficial in helping Sarah’s stress levels.

I believe that the ecological perspective could be beneficial for the Johnson family. Social workers who use this perspective work with their clients within the context of their social environments. Since the Johnson family is in poverty, it is important for the social worker to address this and be sure to help them according to their specific situation. An important ecological term in the ecological perspective is the person-in-environment focus. “A person-in-environment focus sees people as constantly interacting with various systems around them. These systems include the family, friends, work, social services, politics, religion, goods and

services, and educational systems” (Kirst-Ashman and Hull, 2018). The social work role is to improve the relationships between the person and their environment, also known as improving person-in-environment fit. “The notion of transactions with the social environment helps provide focus when a homeless family is not getting the resources it needs. A focus on the interface between family and environment leads a social worker to emphasize getting the family the services and support it requires to survive” (Kirst-Ashman and Hull, 2018). Since the Johnson family originally came in looking for more financial resources, the person-in-environment focus could help to connect them to potential people or social services that could help with this.

### **Reflection**

I believe that the generalist intervention model will be very important in my personal work. Concepts like fields of practice, systems theory, the ecological perspective, research informed practice, etc. will be crucial to understand when working with clients from different backgrounds and who struggle with different types of problems. Also having the appropriate research skills will be important in my future work. I need to be able to evaluate the work done with clients, evaluate macro system effectiveness, and be able to understand and analyze literature and research in social work. All of these skills based on research will help to assure the client is meeting their goals, having their needs met, and assuring that research done will be relevant to the client’s situation. Lastly, following the values and ethics of social work will be impactful for my future clients. Values like service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence are set in place for a reason. They allow for us as social workers to assure that we treat others equally and with respect. Many of these values align with my personal values, but it is important for me to evaluate my personal beliefs and values and not allow for them to interfere with my work. The

social work ethics set in place help to guide social workers and remind them to leave personal values aside and focus on what is best for the client.

### **Possible Countertransference Occurrences**

Two possible countertransference occurrences that could influence my personal response or reaction to the client's story would be advice giving and false assurance. Initially I would feel horrible for both Sarah and the Johnson family, especially since the Johnson's son needs surgery. I could see myself simply wanting to provide these people with some sort of hope or comfort by reassuring them that it would all be okay. Also, I could see myself wanting to relieve their stress by fixing the problem for them through my personal advice and experience. Both of these responses can be natural, but extremely harmful to clients. Clients deserve the right to self-determination, and therefore giving my own personal advice, even with good intentions, can affect their ability to self-determination. The client is the expert in their own situation, so what works for me may not work for my client. My advice could end up being more harmful than helpful. False assurances may help me to feel better, but they are harmful to clients. They may cause the social worker to appear ingenuine and could affect trust since false assurances cannot be guaranteed. A way that I could improve myself and become more self-aware would be to practice using ethical responses. Sometimes pitfalls can be natural reactions, so it is important to practice the correct way to respond so that it becomes more natural.

## References

Kirst-Ashman, K. K., & Hull, G. H. (2018). *Understanding Generalist Practice* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Cengage Learning.