

Southern Adventist University
School of Social Work and Family Studies

Reflection Paper

By

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Article Summary

The article covered this week was “The Strengths Model of Case Management: Principles and Helping Functions.” The article covered six principles that are the foundation of the strengths model. These principles include helping the client identify their strengths instead of on their weaknesses, the relationship between client and worker, The client is viewed as the director of the helping process, all individuals have the ability to learn and grow, helping clients within their community not just in an office , and viewing the entire community as potential resources.

The article also covered strategies that promote effective communication between the worker and client. Among these were talk to people...do not interview them, validate the individual and do not judge them, talk about things you have in common, engage in activities you both enjoy, help with immediate needs, and be sensitive to their cultural.

Critique

Of all the articles we have read this semester this one by far was the most informative and made me look back and see what I could have improved in my own interviews that were conducted earlier in the semester. In dealing with the six principles of the strength model I found several issues that I had not yet realized or even thought about when conducting my interviews.

Helping the client focus on their strengths and interests is so much more beneficial than talking to them about the negative aspects of their whole life during the interview. I believe this makes the client feel empowered in that they feel as if they have control of something in their life when all is going wrong. I also agreed with the reading in that the relationship is a key component to the helping process and enables the client to form the tools needed to engage in relationships outside of counseling.

The most interesting part of the article to me was reading about strengths that promote effective engagement from the client's perspective. Talking to the client instead of interview them and engaging in activities that both parties enjoyed really opened my eyes. When you think about it you do learn more about someone if you're driving down the road or just out for a walk together. I believe this not only makes the client feel more comfortable but also the worker and opens the conversation up for more dialogue rather than just question and answer.

Reflection

This article actually impacted me probably much more than a regular student as I thought back about things in my life. While writing that last sentence I just received a phone call from my own counselor, in my own life everything that could go wrong has gone wrong and that's one reason I don't like sitting in a class listening to students complain about things that can be easily fixed as if that's their only problem in life. One of the most important things I remember so far from school was a professor saying that we all need to seek counseling as we all have some baggage we could use help with, well I have a whole luggage rack full. Upon my return from Iraq I started seeing a veteran counselor that has helped me be where I am today with my education. While reading this article I looked at it from the client view and not the case manager's view and I agreed with almost every bit of the information in the article.

When I first arrived home I went through a bad divorce, readjustment issues and everything else you could think of. I found a good job that I loved and the pay was pretty good which helped me through a lot of the issues I was facing such as the all expensive divorce. I continued to see my counselor for two years and eventually got to the point where I just went and saw him when I needed to vent, I believed the counseling did help me and I no longer needed it but I would still just stop by for a one a month or every other month visit. Well somehow

someone at my work found about me seeing a counselor for PTSD and I was fired on Memorial day of all days. After this everything started spiraling downwards as now I had no job and was now raising an eight year old daughter on my own. The reason given for my termination was that state law stated I could not perform my job if I had a mental disorder and PTSD was considered just that, although I had never been in any trouble at my place of employment and my own direct supervisor advised I was the best worker he had worked with in over 30 plus years, the law said I could not work there. Needless to say I started back with my counseling as now I needed it more than ever and the only person I trusted was my counselor who had helped me through my other problems upon my arrival home. When visiting my counselor he would talk to me not interview me and explain to me about the things I had in my life which made me take a second look and why I needed to keep going. He became a friend and mentor and had helped me so much that that's when I came to the decision that's what I wanted to do, help people facing problems such as I had.

I was later contacted by a social worker out of Arizona by the name of Allen Kates who had said he heard about my story and was writing a book and wanted to know if I could talk to him about my situation. We talked in depth and he explained to me that he advocates for things and with a situation such as mine he would be willing to help me out. My counselor from the veteran center got me enrolled in what's called a chapter 31 program where the military would pay for disabled veterans to return to school. Without him I would have never even known such a program existed so once again he was by my side through the whole thing. For the last two years I have been fighting a legal battle and have had to advocate on my own along with my counselor and Mr. Kates so that other veterans in my situation would not face the same issues I have. Doing so has open up a whole other can of worms in that I had to expose my military

medical file along with all my counseling records to the public and are now open for all to view. So much for Hippa, right? I had been in a third world country for almost four years and have no clue how all this technology works with blackboard and emails but I figure I'll keep trying and learn as I go. I may not have the brains to write outstanding papers or ace test but I have the desire to help individuals and I am good at communicating and understanding where these people are coming from. I believe the whole reason I'm here today is because my own counselor followed the strengths model in equipping me with the motivation and desire to proceed with something I believe I can be good at. Had my counselor taken a different road and not used the information in this article I have no clue where I would be today.

Although I have my own set of problems I want to help others that have gone through situations such as mine