THE PROCESS OF GENERALIST PRACTICE

Chapter 4

Defining Generalist Practice

- Flexible
- Solid knowledge base
- Wide range of skills

Systems Theory

System:
- A set of units with relationships among them.
- An entity composed of separate but interacting and interdependent parts.

Systems Theory

- Homeostasis: most living systems seek a balance to maintain and preserve the system.
- Synergy: what is achieved when the larger system is functioning optimally.
  - The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
- Boundary: a point where one system begins and another ends.

Systems Theory

- Systems can be OPEN or CLOSED.

Ecological Approach

- Social environment-conditions, circumstances and interactions of human beings
- Coping-the struggle to adjust to conditions and problems

Entropy: systems tend to lose their ability to function and can eventually stagnate and die.
Trevor’s Example
- Draw Trevor’s system
  - Micro
  - Mezzo
  - Macro
- Use the ecological perspective to evaluate Trevor’s situation.

Strength Perspective
- All people have strengths that can be tapped and used
- Strengths improve client motivation with emphasis on positive strengths
- Strengths promote cooperative exploration between the worker and client resulting in empowerment of client
- Strengths keep from blaming the victim
- All situations, even bleak ones, have resources and choices

Planned-Change Process (problem solving)
- Engagement-Intake: establishing rapport
- Assessment: strength perspective
- Planning: goal setting
- Implementation: follow through
- Evaluation: accountability
- Termination: ending the relationship

PROCESS of Working with Individuals and Families
1. Engagement-Intake
   - Purpose is to engage the client and help client decide whether to enter treatment.
   - Emphasis is on the problem as perceived by the client (not the worker).
   - Emphasis is on the here-and-now.

The Social Worker / Client Relationship
Self-determination:
- Client decides whether to accept or decline services.
- Client makes choices between treatment alternatives.

The Social Worker / Client Relationship
Confidentiality
- Individualization and acceptance
- Social work assumes the inherent worth and importance of the individual and the inter-dependence between the individual and society.
The Social Worker / Client Relationship

- Nonjudgmental attitude
  - All human beings have strengths and weaknesses.
  - Confront behaviors, but don't attack the person.
- Freedom of expression

PROCESS of Working with Individuals and Families

2. Assessment

- Obtain relevant information about the client and perceived needs.
- Determine client's current level of functioning.
  - Purpose: to understand the problem and determine how to reduce its impact.

PROCESS of Working with Individuals and Families

2. Assessment (cont'd)

- Recognize the uniqueness of every situation;
- Recognize the importance of treatment planning;
- Identify strengths.
- Assessment never stops.

Development of Practice Skills

- Interviewing skills
  - Focused and goal-directed.
- Communication skills are essential.
- EMPATHY

Development of Practice Skills

- Conceptual skills
  - Ability to understand the interrelationships of various dimensions of the client's life experiences and behaviors, put them into a helpful framework, and to arrive at appropriate intervention strategies.

Development of Practice Skills

- Recording skills
**PROCESS of Working with Individuals and Families**

4. Implementation/Intervention (same as treatment)
   - **Purpose:** assist clients toward an acceptable resolution of problems and to address their unmet needs.
   - **Starts from the first contact.**
   - **Determined by the client's needs.**

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**Process of casework**

- 5. Evaluation
  - Did it work?
  - How do you know?
  - Is there a need to change or modify goals?
  - Does the client know it worked?

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**PROCESS of Social Casework**

6. Termination and Evaluation
   - Shouldn't come as a surprise.
   - Avoid making the client dependent on you.
   - Review progress and client of their ability to function effectively.
   - Evaluation is an on-going process.

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**Now you try it!**

- Develop a planned-change (treatment plan) for Trevor using the stages.

- 1. Engagement
- 2. Assessment
- 3. Planning
- 4. Implementation
- 5. Evaluation
- 6. Termination

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**Roles of social worker**

- Counselor
- Educator
- Broker
- Case coordinator
- Mobilizer
- Mediator
- Facilitator
- Advocate

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**Case Management (case coordinator)**

A procedure to plan, seek, and monitor services from different social agencies and staff on behalf of a client. Usually one agency takes primary responsibility for the client and assigns a case manager, who coordinates services, advocates for the client and sometimes controls resources and purchases services for the client.

*Social Work Dictionary, 1995*
Two central functions of case management:

1. Provide individualized advice and counseling to clients in the community; and
2. Link clients to needed services and supports in community agencies and informal helping networks.