Social Work

Name

Institution Affiliation

Course

Date

**Brief Description of the Client**

Juliana is the name of my client but her name is changed to Margret with an aim of her safeguarding her identity. Juliana is an older adult of about 84 years and among the middle class individuals in her community. My client has been a member of her neighborhood since the early 1960s and has been blessed with a beautiful family of three kids and several grandchildren. Juliana’s husband died and she is currently living with her physically challenged son who is about 62 years old. Juliana also lost her teenage old son in a grisly murder while cycling in the neighborhood. Marriage life presented its fair share of challenges such as mental and physical mistreatment that my client experienced. Juliana has wonderful and worst experiences as a resident in her neighborhood. As a result of her obsession with dogs, Juliana cultivated an interest for walking her dog within her residential area which creates room for her to communicate with community members as she walks. This wonderful experience has made my client a physically active hence people know her for walking in the neighborhood with her dog. Some of her worst experiences of living in her residential is the community members’ wrong perception of her since she is interested in walking her dog as she talks to the people she runs across around the block rather than sitting down to catch up with them. My client lives a lonely life since her disabled son does not engage her in conversations or walking the dog whereas her married children live in other residential areas. Juliana does not receive social support services from some social groups due to the wrong view of offering her such services. This study aims at understanding and investigating my client’s risk assessment, and applying professional judgement under the lens of law to safeguard Juliana from the community’s wrong perceptions of her being anti-social and dangerous.

**Application of Gibbs Reflective Model to Support the Risk Analysis and Case Discussion**

I will use the Gibbs Reflective Model to investigate the risks linked with Juliana's case were identified and then controlled in order to improve Juliana's well-being in her neighborhood. The Gibbs Reflective Model has six stages namely; description of facts, description of emotions, evaluation of the first two stages, analysis, conclusions and action (*The 6 Stages of Gibbs Reflective Cycle- a Complete Guide*, 2021).

1. **Description of Facts**

The brief facts about Margaret’s case is that she is an older adult who has an experience with dogs which made her to develop an interest in walking with her dogs around the block as she chats with the people in the neighborhood. However, the community members have a wrong perception of her being anti-social which has contributed to some organizations failing to render her their social support services. Margaret was referred to the Adult social care after the community members reported her as someone who was wandering, getting lost, knocking on people’s doors and looking through the window enquiring of a man with a dog. Stacey (grandson’s wife) confirmed that Margaret is at a higher risk of causing problems to many people. David (Margaret’s son) conformed that his mother is vulnerable and she is at the risk of getting hurt or lost. David also said that her forgetful habit is really annoying. The law enforcers believed Stacey and confirmed that the volunteer organizations declined to support Margaret due to her risk of harming others. I decided to visit Margaret Hibbert on the 31/03/2022 based on the information that she knocks on people’s doors asking for a man with a dog.

1. **Description of Feelings/Emotions**

I feel that Margaret needs empowerment and social support to encourage her to continue walking her dog around the block for progressive health improvement. I feel that she needs a day care service to improve her social interaction with people. As an older adult, Margaret deserves a free influenza vaccination and NHS eye examination to boost her immune system. I feel the community should support her by offering her their dogs for walking to improve her emotional constancy and happiness. As an older adult, Margaret stands a higher chance of getting lost and therefore, she deserves a car and caregiver for support and assistance during her appointments. I feel that Margaret needs to be protected within the confines of the law. The community bus can play an essential role to assist Margaret in her movements to the grocery shops and back to her home. I also feel that Margaret needs more support to ensure that she maintains a clean environment and eating balance diets that can provide her with energy to walk around the block. There were influences affecting the actions or behaviours of others. For instance, law enforcers believed in Stacey’s perspective which influenced their points of view regarding why the social organizations had declined in offering social support services to Margaret. There were perceived difficulties in Margaret’s situation because it seems as if she was suffering from dementia but I am not certain about her condition.

1. **Evaluation**

The good thing about the whole experience is that the community members took an action towards safeguarding Joanna’s wellbeing by referring her to an Adult social care. Despite the community’s wrong perception of Margaret, she was enjoying her walking adventures with her dog around the block. The bad thing about the experience is the wrong perception of the community members who went to the extent of posting Joanna’s pictures in social media platforms where she appeared as a dirty woman who meant trouble to others. The facts might have affected my actions or emotions by developing perceptions about Margaret as other community members without looking at the situation from Margaret’s point of view. On the hand, the feelings might have affected my actions by striving to take action and improving Margaret’s social support system.

1. **Analysis**

I picked this incident to reflect on because as a social work student, I believe that the vulnerable members of our society such as Margaret deserve a strong social support system rather than the community’s wrong perception about them. The incident makes sense because the society comprises of different types of people with differing perceptions and ways of doing things. It makes sense that Margaret lives a lonely life which influences her to enjoy walking with her dog and avoiding engaging in community activities. It also makes sense that the community perceives Margaret as anti-social and therefore, dangerous to others. Given the preceding three stages, it makes sense how individuals how a person’s perception can influence the actions of several other people. The main area of concern for the future is to use professional judgement in social work and legal framework to ascertain the assessment of an individual’s risks.

1. **Conclusion**

I have discovered that the lack of professional assessment or judgement of an incident can influence individuals to perceive the situation wrongly. I have learnt from this incident that an isolation or lonely life can influence a person to withdraw from social interactions. I have also learnt that a person’s choice of words can influence a group’s actions or change of behaviours. The other lesson from the incident is that the vulnerable people such as the disabled and older adults require the society’s social support to improve their health and interactions with the community. The question that remains is what strategies can be implemented to prevent the occurrence of such incidences in future?

1. **Action**

From now henceforth, I will be applying my social work knowledge to understand and apply professional knowledge when such a situation arises. I also will be confirming the law perspective regarding vulnerable societal members such as Margaret and how to treat them in such incidences. I will require the assistance of my instructors in understanding the professional judgement and applying the law in similar incidences. I will also need access to credible sources of information that provide the concepts and ways of solving such circumstances.

**My Understanding of the Legal Framework and Application of Professional Judgement**

Margaret and other vulnerable adults need protection from law against all forms of abuse by the society. The legislature passed The Law Commission review of adult social care with an aim of protecting the susceptible societal members from mistreatment by family members, unsuitable professionals and the general public (Spencer-Lane, 2008). Some of the recommendations in this consultation paper include; the lead coordinating duty for safeguarding is held by local social services administrations and the need for organizations to collaborate in adult protection cases. The Care Act 2014 protects individuals such as Margaret by promoting their wellbeing and ensuring that the local authorities should value the need of protecting people from abandonment and abuse (Care Act, 2014). I also understand that the Human Rights Act 1998 protects the rights of an individual such as Margaret to public safety, freedoms and health (Department of Health, 2015). My understanding of the Equality Act 2010 is that it protects the vulnerable societal members such as Margaret from discrimination and abuse by their family members or public. Margaret and other vulnerable community members deserve advocacy roles or legal representation to ensure their voices are heard in a law court.

In my application of professional judgement and autonomy, I intend to use social work ethics by working with the clients such as Margaret to understand their sides of the story (Blackman & Featherstone, 2015). Maintaining professionalism will be my main priority in terms of my presentation and reliability by the client. Social workers should acknowledge the human rights of their clients and promote socio-economic wellbeing (*Professional Capabilities Framework-End of Last Placement/Completion*, 2018). My focus is to ensure Margaret and other clients in her situation enjoy their rights as enshrined in the law and working with their families and community members in efforts towards ending discrimination or oppression. After assessing the client’s risks, my decision-making process will be based on identifying the short- and long-term effects of mental, social, environmental, and physiological aspects on people's lives, taking age and development into consideration, and how this influences practice (Blackman & Featherstone, 2015). Smith who is a social worker student based his professional judgement of Margaret’s case according to home safety, environmental checks and her general orientation. Social workers can use several models such as the procedural model to ascertain whether the client is suitable for a specific method of service delivery (Maclean & Harrison, 2015). Therefore, I can apply my professional judgement by using several theories as a social work intervention with Margaret and other clients in future. Reflecting and assessing the incidences are essential for social workers who are interacting with the clients, family and community members to improve an individual’s social wellbeing (Gould & Baldwin, 2004). In the case of Margaret, I intend to reflect on the incidence using my work supervision and support from my colleagues with an aim of maintaining my career creativeness and improve on my practice.

Social workers are critical thinkers who assess their interactions with individuals to build working relationships that will create room for implementation of the best interventions (Rutter & Brown, 2015). I will engage Margaret in a friendly conversation and use professionalism to advice and collaborate in finding a client-centered solution to improve her social interactions with other community members. Analyzing the clients’ risks before implementing the appropriate intervention measures is essential in the social work field because it reveals professionalism (Brian & Killick, 2020). After gathering information from David, Stacey and the neighbors, I intend to assess Margaret risks which will influence my decision-making process on the suitable criteria for service provision.

**Discussion of the Theories, Methods and Skills that Informed my Practice**

I intend to apply several skills, theories and methods based on my social work knowledge and practice. I will use a solution-focused therapy which will entail my collaboration with Margaret to develop the appropriate interventions which are client-centered (Malachy & Prince, 2017). The therapy is essential in assisting Margaret to manage her challenges by adapting specific behaviours that can prevent her from having the risk of getting hurt and lost. The solution-focused therapy is essential for Margaret because she will discover her strengths in the process of participating in finding the best solution for her case (Malachy & Prince, 2017). I also intend to use several models in determining the best criteria to offer my services to Margaret. These models include the exchange, the procedural and the questioning models (Maclean & Harrison, 2015). The questioning model of assessing will entail me asking Margaret several questions, listen to her and assess her answers with an aim of proposing the best intervention for solving her wandering off problem. The procedural model will involve me collecting gathering information regarding Margaret’s case in an effort towards making a judgement whether she is suitable for a particular method of service provision. The procedural model is essential because it will focus on my agenda and therefore, as a worker I will concentrate much on her strengths and weaknesses which will influence my decision. On the other hand, the exchange model focuses on individuals as specialists in their own cases and therefore, the model aims at providing the worker with sufficient information regarding a client’s case (Maclean & Harrison, 2015). I intend to listen to Margaret, the neighbors, David and Stacey without trying to interpret the meaning of their perceptions. There, the exchange model focuses more on the client’s agenda than on the social worker’s agenda.

Some of the skills that informed my practice include critical analytical skills which enabled me to assess Margaret’s case by asking her questions, listening and analyzing her answers with an aim of determining the best intervention to use (Rogowski, 2013). Clients such as Margaret need advocacy roles for their voices to be heard and therefore, the advocacy skills that informed my practice were essential for understanding the legal perspective and incorporating it in my application of professional judgement in Margaret’s situation. The communication skills that inform my practice will be essential in engaging Margaret in a conversation that will contribute to building a strong working relationship focusing on a client-centered approach (Rogowski, 2013). Another skill essential in my social work career is emotional intelligence which has enabled me to understand Margaret’s wandering off behaviour and controlling my emotions when conversing with her to prevent behavioural influence or development of negative attitudes. Empathy is important in the social work profession because it will enable me understand the Margaret’s feelings and how her family and community’s wrong perceptions influences her behaviours (Sicora et al., 2021). Cultural competency skills inform my practice and therefore, before assessing Margaret’s incidence, understanding her background and beliefs will enable me to understand her better (Rogowski, 2013).

**The Significance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Social Work Practice**

Inclusivity, cultural diversity and fairness are the essential requirements in the social work profession. Social workers interact with clients from all walks of life depending on a person’s religion, race, cultural beliefs, social class, sexual orientation and disability. Social work organizations should practice risk assessment to determine the state of the client to enhance their professional judgement in effort towards a solution-based approach of the incidence (Akhtar, 2012). Therefore, the profession requires social workers to practice anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory values in efforts towards implementing an appropriate criterion for service provision to the client. The worker is able to understand and assess the client’s incidence by practising fairness in terms of listening to the perspectives of the individual, family members and the community (Ife et al., 2022). Risk assessment can be effective if social workers practice inclusivity by listening to all the concerned parties and afterwards using an exchange model to assess the clients’ answers. Equality means that every person regardless of their age or perspective has a right to enjoy their rights and freedoms as stipulated in the legal framework (Equality Act 2010). Therefore, understanding such laws will enable social workers to understand which criteria of solution provision are suitable for the client after assessing their risks. In the case of Margaret, from a social work perspective, she needs a social worker who will understand her side of the story by assessing whether it is true that she wanders off around the block looking for a man with a dog . The significance of inclusion, equality and diversity in social work practice enables workers to promote social justice and wellbeing to all groups of people hence ending discrimination.

Inclusion, equality and diversity in the practice of social work is important in gaining cultural competence skills which are critical in understanding the cultural and social backgrounds of different clients before assessing their risks and applying professional judgment on their cases (Danso, 2018). Risk assessment aims at evaluating the good and the bad side of an incidence and recommending appropriate solutions to the case at hand. For instance, in the case of Margaret, the good thing is that the community members took action by referring her to the Adult social care organization. On the other hand, the bad thing was developing wrong perceptions about her anti-social behaviour. Various social organizations are joining hands with people of all races to advocate for equality, inclusion and appreciation of cultural diversity (*Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in Social Work*, 2021). Diversity and equality are essential in the practice of social work because workers can recognize the needs of children, the disabled and older adults in foster homes. Inclusion, diversity and equality are significant because they create room for social workers to join hands with the clients in efforts towards reducing the risks of harming themselves and those close to them (Ramsay & Boddy, 2017). Inclusion, diversity and equality are significant in social work practice because it can create collaboration between social workers, the communities, legal experts and healthcare providers in reporting cases of oppression and discrimination in the society with an aim of bringing the perpetrators to book (*Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | the Fostering Network*, 2018). Social workers have the privilege of participating in mass awareness by educating the public about the significance of inclusion, diversity and equality by assessing what might be the cause of an individual behaving in a particular manner rather than perceiving their actions wrongly. The social work profession can be a dream professional for many students joining higher learning institutions due to equality, inclusivity and diversity that guarantees graduates from all walks of life job placements.

**Conclusion**

The vulnerable members of the society such as older adults and the disabled have a greater risk of experiencing wrong perceptions from their families and communities. Social workers are important for assessing these risks using various models such as the Gibbs reflexive model to ascertain whether the client is suitable for specific criteria of service provision. A method such as the solution-focused therapy builds a closer relationship between the worker and client hence creating room for the development of a client-centered intervention measure. Other models for assessing the risks include the exchange, procedural and questioning models which focus on either the agenda of the social worker or the client. Diversity, inclusion and equality are essential in social work practice because it gives the vulnerable members of the society a sense of belonging. A collaboration between legal professionals and social workers is more likely to occur due to inclusion and diversity in efforts towards challenging oppression and discrimination in the society.

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