

**BSW-125**

**Social Case Work and Social Group Work**

**Block**

# **1**

**BASICS OF SOCIAL CASE WORK**

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**UNIT 1**

**Introduction to Social Case Work: Historical Development**

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**UNIT 2**

**Basics of Social Case Work**

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**UNIT 3**

**Practice of Social Case Work**

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**Unit 4**

**Interviewing in Social Case Work**

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**Unit 5**

**Home Visit and Recording in Social Casework**

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## **COURSE INTRODUCTION**

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Welcome to the course on, ‘Social Casework and Social Group Work’. There are four blocks in this course.

Block 1 is on “Basics of Social Case Work”. This block deals with case work, which is the oldest and the most developed method of social work profession. In this block, we will introduce you to the history of social case work, the principles, values, and various approaches of social case work. We will also discuss interviewing skills, recording and home visit as some of the techniques of social case work.

Block 2 is on “Selected Settings in Social Case Work”. In this block, the several components of social case work, the fields of social case work and the practice of social case work in the educational and industrial settings will be discussed.

Block 3 deals with “Social Work with Groups”. In this block, we will discuss about the concept of groups, the characteristics and significance of groups, the stages of development of groups and leadership in groups.

Block 4 is on “Introduction to Social Group Work”. This block traces the historical journey of group work from its origin to its acceptance as a recognised method of social work. The block will explain the principles, values, skills and approaches relevant to social group work. The last unit, “The Social Worker’s role in Group Work Process” deals with the social worker’s role in group work.

This course will give you a comprehensive understanding of social case work and social group work as the primary methods in social work.

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## **BLOCK INTRODUCTION**

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This block 'Basics of Social Case work' is the first block of the Course BSW-125, 'Social Case Work and Social Group work'. The block deals with casework which is the oldest and the most developed method of social work profession. In the initial period when social work was emerging as a profession and a discipline it was through casework that social workers performed their activities. Subsequently, they gained recognition from the society for their profession. Skills and techniques of casework are well developed today.

Casework is also important as it is used by those practicing other methods like group work, community organisation, social action, social work research and social welfare administration. The skills and techniques of casework are used by the social worker practically in every setting. Thus, casework also becomes a base for other methods.

The first unit 'Introduction to Casework: Historical Development' will introduce you to the history of casework in the West and in India. Basic assumptions, principles and values of casework will be discussed in the historical perspective. The second unit 'Basics of Social Casework' deals with the principles and values of casework in detail. Various approaches to casework based on different theories will also be discussed. The third unit 'Practice of Social Casework' shows how casework is done with the individual. The different phases are described so that you understand the various elements involved in the caseworker-client relationship, how the caseworker develops a relationship with the client and finally how he/she uses the relation to solve the client's problems. The fourth unit on 'Interviewing in Social Casework' deals with an important aspect of casework which is interviewing. Most of casework process is performed through interviewing the client and others related to him/her. The fifth and last unit on 'Home Visit and Recording in Social Casework' deals with the social worker's visit to the client's home and recording or documentation of the whole case. These are very important skills for a caseworker.

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## **UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL CASEWORK: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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\* Ms. Hema Mehta

### **Contents**

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 The Nature of Individual
- 1.3 Problems Faced by Individual and Families
- 1.4 Concept of Social Casework
- 1.5 Historical Development of Casework in West and India
- 1.6 Major Landmarks in the History of Casework Development
- 1.7 Value of Social Casework within the Sphere of Social Work
- 1.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.9 Key Words
- 1.10 Suggested Readings
- 1.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### **1.0 OBJECTIVES**

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After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the concept of social casework;
- visualise the individual needs and the problems of individuals and families;
- learn the development of casework in West;
- know the development of casework in India;
- understand the contribution of Miss Richmond, Friendly Visitors and importance of Freudian theory; and
- know the value of social casework in social work

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### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

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All human beings are part of the society and everyone in the society has different social role and duties. While performing his role and duties, individual faces many problems in one form or the other which hinders his performance as a social being. Casework is the oldest and the most developed method of solving individual's problems and improving his social relations. In this unit we will discuss the concept of casework and its usefulness in solving these problems. We will also study the evolution and historical development of casework in the West and in India.

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### **1.2 THE NATURE OF INDIVIDUAL**

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Every individual is unique and his/her needs are different from others in society. Consequently, the treatment given or approach to one individual cannot be used for the other individual. To understand human behaviour and the individual difference Grace Mathew has given following proposition:

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- An individual's behaviour is conditioned by his/her environment and his/her life experiences. Behaviour refers to reacting, feeling, thinking, etc. Attributes of human being are not visible to others. The conditions and influences surrounding the persons constitute the environment.
- For human growth and development, it is essential that certain basic needs should be met. The basic needs may be – physical and mental. Physical needs refer to needs for food, shelter and clothing. Mental needs can be in the form of emotional security, need of parents, child, and spouse.
- Emotional needs are real and they cannot be met or removed through intellectual reasoning.
- Behaviour is purposeful and is in response to the individual's physical and emotional needs.
- Other people's behaviour can be understood only in terms of one's own emotional and intellectual comprehension.

Each and every individual has his/her own importance. As every human being has his/her own set of qualities, he/she cannot be neglected.

Herbert Bisno described the following attributes of individual nature:

- Each individual by the very fact of his/her existence is of worth.
- Human suffering is undesirable and should be prevented or at least alleviated, whenever possible.
- All human behaviour is the result of interaction between the biological organism and its environment.
- Man does not naturally act in a rational manner. Man is amoral and asocial at birth.
- There are both individual and common human needs.
- There are important differences between individuals and they must be recognised and allowed for.
- Human motivation is complex and frequently obscure.
- Family relationships are of primary importance in the early developments of individual.
- "Experiencing" is essential for learning process.

While these two attributes regarding individuals seem obvious at first glance they are often forgotten. Our tendency to simplify events and our biases often prevents us from realising the uniqueness of the individuals with whom we are dealing. We often observe how individuals with different natures are treated using the common approach. For example, we hear people say that beggars have no self-respect and are lazy. To avoid this mistake, caseworkers have to remind themselves that each client who comes to the agency has his own outlook, feelings and attitudes. Their problems may have some similarities but has important differences. Thus, the treatment must be differentiated according to the needs of the individual. The caseworker should attempt to understand the client's need and respond to him in an individualised way according to his needs. Similarly, the caseworker should recognise the individual as important simply because he is a human being. Professional acceptance of clients by putting aside personal bias is an important requirement of the caseworker. The caseworker may have to deal with terrorists, criminals and other deviants who he/she may personally dislike.

According to Maslow's prioritisation, human needs can be categorised as follows:

- **Physiological needs:** This refers to basic needs of food, shelter, cloth, air, and water.
- **Safety needs:** It is the nature of human being that it prefers to be on the safer side and avoid physical damage and hazards.
- **Need for belongingness and love:** Every human being loves to be loved and to belong to a particular group, with a certain level of prestige in that group. If a person is deprived from parental love, affection of siblings and peer group, there are chances of development of violent behaviour in him.
- **Esteemed needs:** It is general psychology of a human being that it likes to be at the top position, to have status in the society and acceptance in his own group.
- **Need for self-growth and identification:** After fulfillment of above needs there is need for opportunities that should be available to a person for self-growth and to prove his capabilities for his remarkable identification in the society.
- **Need for cognitive understanding of self and the world around:** When the person recognises himself and the world around him, it is said that all his needs are fulfilled. It is the top most need in the need hierarchy, which governs the person towards spirituality and very few persons achieve it.

We can say that each human being has a number of needs requiring satisfaction. If these needs are not fulfilled it may result in frustration followed by crisis situation. The caseworker has to understand the client's need in order to study, diagnose and to give treatment according to his needs.

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### 1.3 PROBLEMS FACED BY INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILIES

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Problems may be caused due to the non-fulfillment of needs or inability to perform his social roles. The social roles are connected with being a parent, spouse, wage-earning worker, etc.

#### Causes of Human Problems

Problem of social functioning causes distress to the individuals. Casework method tries to resolve individual problems through scientific approach.

According to Encyclopedia of Social Work Vol.1, the reason for human problems may be divided into five categories:

- 1) Lack of material resources
- 2) Misconception about the situation and relationships and lack of appropriate information
- 3) Illness or health problems related to a disability
- 4) Emotional distress resulting from stressful situations
- 5) Personality features or deficiencies

Grace Mathew undertook a survey of 200 casework records, which was based on the reports of casework services rendered for the clients in India. From the sample obtained from Survey of Casework Record; the problems can be categorised as follows:

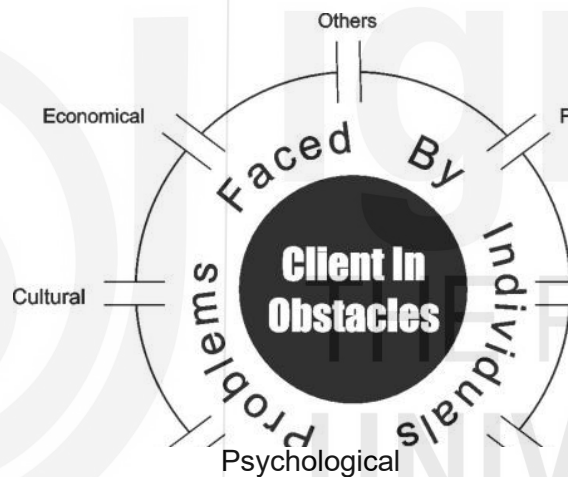
- 1) Problems related to illness and disabilities



- 2) Problems due to lack of material resources
- 3) School related problems
- 4) Problems related to institutionalisation
- 5) Behaviour problems
- 6) Problems of marital discord
- 7) Problem situations needing a follow-up service
- 8) Needs related to rehabilitation of people handicapped by disabilities
- 9) Predicaments and difficulties of client caught up in problems that have been regarded as social problems like gambling, prostitution, alcoholism, drug addiction and unmarried motherhood.

**Types of Problem**

In general, we can categorise the problems faced by individuals as:



**Figure: Problems Faced by Individuals**

Broadly we can say that in a society many problems are associated with the individual and the prime aim of casework is to resolve individual problems in order to help him/her to be independent and effective in social functioning.

**Check Your Progress I**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) Broadly mention the major types of problems faced by individuals.

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## 1.4 CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CASEWORK

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In the words of Gordon and Hamilton “social case work may be defined as the art of doing different things for and with different people by cooperating with them to achieve at one and the same time their own and society’s betterment.”. Miss Richmond gives this definition of casework. “Social case work consists of processes which develop personality through adjustments consciously affected, individual by individual, between men and their social environment.” Thus, it is both art and science of resolving individual problems in social area, for individual and society are interdependent and social forces influence behaviour and attitude of an individual.

The focus of each branch is different but the practice of these three branches is not mutually exclusive. Social casework is concerned with individual and his adjustment to life and general social welfare. It does not concentrate on individual excluding the social factors. In other words, the basic objective of social casework is to promote social welfare with basic focus on individuals.

### Basic Assumptions of Social Casework

The main work of social casework is to enable an individual in solving a problem through self-efforts. The social worker’s job is to provide adequate help and guidance. According to **Hamilton**, the chief assumptions of social casework are:

- Individual and society are interdependent and complimentary to each other.
- Various factors operative in the society influence human behaviour and attitude.
- Some problems are psychological and some are interpersonal in nature.
- In the process of social casework, conscious and controlled relations are established for achieving its aims.
- Social casework enables an individual to solve his/ her problems by channelising his/her energy and capacity positively.
- Social casework provides everyone equal right to progress. It also provides help to every needy and disabled person.

### Philosophical Assumptions

The ultimate goal of social casework is to establish harmonious relationship between individual and the society to which he belongs. According to Grace Mathew there are certain assumptions, which constitute the fundamental structure of social casework. They are generated out of the collective thinking and traditions in casework.

These philosophical assumptions are:

- Every human being has to be considered as a person with dignity and worth.
- Human beings are interdependent and it governs their interaction in social groups.
- There are common human needs for growth and development of individuals. The existence of common needs does not negate the uniqueness of individuals. Every individual is like all other human beings in some aspects and like no other individual in certain aspects.

- Every individual has within him/her, the potential for growth and achievement and he/she has a right to the realisation of this potential. From this it follows that people have the capacity to change.
- Society has an obligation to help those who do not have the means for the realisation of their potentials.

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## **1.5 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CASEWORK IN WEST AND INDIA**

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Individuals in every society right from ancient times were helped by others to solve their problems. All religions encouraged the helping of the poor and helpless people. However, it took professional shape in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is impossible to pin point the actual beginning of social casework in west but some important landmarks in its growth are given below.

### **Early Beginnings**

The Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor (A.I.C.P.), formed in America in 1843, approached the problem of poverty more individually than it was ever done previously. The aims of A.I.C.P. were to visit the poor at homes, to give counsel, to assist them practically in obtaining employment, to instill in them self-respect and self-reliance, to inculcate the habits of economy and whenever absolutely necessary to provide such relief as should be suited to their wants.

The first professional School of Social Work was established in New York School in 1898. The establishment of this institution indicates that social work had sufficiently large body of knowledge and skills by that time. Further, the need was felt for better trained professionals as complicated modern problems could not be handled in traditional ways.

### **1877s**

The earliest organised effort in USA was the establishment of American Charity Organisation Society in 1877. One of the aims of the society was to find out the ways and means of helping the poor and needy and thus to organise individualised service. The society used volunteers called “Friendly Visitors”. We will be studying in detail about the contribution of Friendly Visitors in coming unit of the same unit. The main plan of this organisation included the investigation of applicants to assess the need, central registration, recording and relief giving.

### **1914-1917**

The first training programme for the casework started at this time. Casework at this time was based more on medical model. For sometime casework was only confined to sick persons, i.e., a sick person to be treated was the priority.

The term “work with case” was used for the first time in national conference in USA. The first professional training programme especially for the casework was started in the form of summer training. The impact of this training programme resulted in the need for more substantial training and schools of social work attached to the agencies came into existence. When these schools started regular training programme, they were recognised as professionals.

Miss Richmond and Francis McLean, offered specialised service to thousand of clients. Social casework journal of family service association grew out of efforts of this great pioneer movement. The first book in case work “Social Diagnosis” was published in 1917 by Miss Richmond.

### **Impact of the First World War**

Prior to the First World War, major emphasis was given on the social factor, which influenced individuals who had problems. The causes of these problems were found in the environment and the larger social economical pressure under which people lived. The primary basis of social casework was human behaviour.

The impact of the Second World War was that social work became popular and a large number of people who had not been acquainted with it became familiar with it. Medical and psychiatric social workers were especially in demand during the war. Many men and women came to know the meaning of social casework for the first time.

The First World War made a wide impact on social casework. Psychiatry in this period became important. The contribution of Freud and his followers influenced the method employed by the caseworker in dealing with the individuals. Child guidance clinic movement and treatment, prevention of mental problem and delinquency strengthened the psychological orientation of this approach.

### **1920s**

At this time the caseworker adopted the new psychoanalytical approach to understand the client and their problems. These caseworkers found the psychoanalytical theory and the concepts in psychology very useful in casework movement. This psychoanalytical theory was given by Freud and known as Freudian psychology made strong impact on casework. Thus, it was the era of psychiatric development of social work. Focus of caseworker was on psychic forces (as per psychoanalysis) within the individuals. Professionals also began to move into other fields like prisons, school, etc.

In late 1920's it was expected that client and his/her involvement in problem solution was essential for the success of casework. At this time caseworker realised that more responsibilities should be given to individuals to make decisions of their life. In 1930, psychoanalytical contributions became very important and social caseworkers accepted the new method of dealing with clients.

Gradually several schools of thought developed with many points in common and number of differences. These schools were based on the theory of Sigmund Freud and Otto Rank.

### **1930s**

It was the era of sudden changes in life-style that lead to economic depression. Casework had to consider the economic factors, which were causing distress to the clients. It was realised that economic distress could lead to emotional disaster and breakdown. The social and economic need of great differentiation refocused sociological and reality consideration for social work and compelled action on the part of federal government. At this time many work programmes such as federal emergency relief act, the work progress administration, the public work administration and the civilian conservation corporation emerged. Thus major outcome of the depression was establishment of governmental public assistant programme. It relieved the voluntary agencies from the task of providing economic help. Caseworker was able to devote more time in dealing with clients inter personal problems.

### **1940s**

The 1940s were dominated by the world war. Social work approaches emerged in the previous decade were transformed by the changes in theory and practice.

### **Impact of the Second World War**

Social casework was greatly influenced by the events of the Second World War. During the war there was increase in personal problems on the part of clients due to financial crises. Emotional problems also increased. To meet these needs and to solve these problems family agencies were started.

## **1950s**

In this era private practice in the social work began. Professional agencies were started growing in the field of case study. Now the caseworker started going to community and the problems of community were taken care indirectly through solving individual problems. It was the period of resettlement, reevaluation, and upgradation for social workers.

## **1960s**

During this period, the most promising development was an increased stress on importance of research. The past overemphasis on either environment or personality gave away the awareness of interdependence of these two factors. In this era social action was more focused to bring about change in the society. Casework method adopted new techniques and principles.

## **Current Trends**

One of the current trends is shifting of caseworker from older and established agencies to newer and experimental areas of social work. Caseworkers are now more aware of their own contribution to human welfare. As a profession it has now gained more popularity. One of the current trends is increased stress on the importance of research. Also, there is growing awareness that personality and environment are interdependent.

## **Importance of Casework as a Method: Casework in India**

Indian culture and religions advocate the need to help the poor and needy. There is also a tradition of knowledgeable individuals providing advice and support to others, for example Krishna gave advice and support to Arjun at the beginning of the Mahabharata war. The Hindu Shastras also emphasised on giving which may be in the form of wealth, knowledge and wisdom. In Buddhism help should be given to relatives and friends. In Islam alms was given by the fortunate to the State and used for welfare of needy. Christian missionaries in India also started activities which aimed at helping the poor. But these efforts were paternalistic in nature and did not aim at making the individual independent. Further, the relationship in these instances was not professional. Thus, there exists an important difference between modern professional casework and traditional helping of needy individuals.

Education of social workers in India started with the training of volunteers engaged in charity and relief activities. In 1911, N.M. Joshi had established Social Service League in Mumbai. This league conducted training programme for volunteers who were at the service of people suffering from famines, epidemics, floods and such other disasters and also for those who conducted welfare programmes among the poor and the destitute. The first professional social workers who did casework in the Indian settings were trained in the American School of Social Work. In 1936 Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work, now known as Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS), was started to impart training to those who had a University degree in the field of social service. Thus, the training for the social work was changed into a full time career oriented educational programme. Casework as a theoretical course and as a method of practice in the academic programme started from the year 1946. Initially social casework was practiced in relatively few agencies and institutions but nowadays social casework is practiced in many agencies, institutions and organisations such as hospitals, clinics, courts, industry, military organisation, family welfare agency, child welfare agency, institution for the aged, destitute, orphans, etc.

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## 1.6 MAJOR LANDMARKS IN THE HISTORY OF CASEWORK DEVELOPMENT

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### Contribution of Friendly Visitor

As we discussed earlier the term Friendly Visitors was first used in 1877 by American Charity Organisation Society for its volunteers. Citizens of England with the object of helping poor people founded this society. These people had funds to help poor and needy. They were kindhearted volunteers who visited poor families to assess their needs and to provide help, guidance and advice. They made their visits in act of charity and not expecting any monetary rewards. They collected data about the needy individuals and families and helped them after assessing their needs.

There were hundreds and hundreds of volunteers who made their visits to the home of poor and brought whatever they could in the way of understanding, sympathy, encouragement and general goodwill. The role of Friendly Visitor was educational one and goal was to improve the character through personal influence. Living advice and being model were two methods by which the visitor influenced the client and there can be no doubt that some of them did exert a wholesome personality influence in difficult personal and family situation. However, there was comparatively little consciousness or the analysis of factors at work in the relationship. At the same time it was probably through the efforts of Friendly Visitors that the concept of scientific charity evolved and seeds of social casework were sown. The visitor found that the problem of all poor people is not alike and they should not be treated in the same manner.

The term Friendly Visitors was subsequently supplemented by the term “Paid Agents”. These Paid Agents developed systematic procedures in performing their task. They collected data about the needy individuals and families and helped them after assessing their needs. Paid Agents also maintained records including personal data and the type of help given to clients. The collective experience of Friendly Visitors and Paid Agents facilitated the understanding of human behaviour.

With the development of Schools of Social Work, Friendly Visitors received training and instructions about the method of investigation, diagnosis and treatment from experienced social worker.

### Check Your Progress II

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) Explain the major role of friendly visitor in the historical development of social casework.

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### Contributions of Mary Richmond

As mentioned earlier, the beginning of professional casework is associated with publication of Mary Richmond’s book “Social Diagnosis”.

In the words of Richmond “Social diagnosis is the attempt to arrive at as exact a definition as possible of social situation and personality of the given client”. She was interested in the formation of

methodology of helping clients. She visualised a diagnostic summary with the following three headings:

- Difficulties defined
- Factors Causal
- Assets and liabilities

Richmond knew that the facts, which were observed and inferred, are not always scientifically reliable. Richmond tried to answer the following questions. “Who arrives at diagnosis? What is the basis of influence? How reliable is the worker’s judgment and the facts on which they are based?”

Richmond found that diagnosis is a process consisting of a sequence of steps in order to facilitate the worker to arrive finally at his/her definition of social situation and personality of the client. The sequence of steps are:

- Interview with client
- Contact with his family and near ones
- Search of inside and outside sources for cooperation
- The interpretation of information collected

#### **Interview with Client**

According to Richmond the primary step is to know the personality of the individual and to study his/her life closely, which can be done by interviewing him/her about his/her family background, family doctor, health agencies, schools, past and present employers, residence and neighbourhood. Interviewer’s aim is to collect information regarding the sources for further information. Richmond also described the objectives of the worker for the interview, which are:

- To give the client fair and patient hearing.
- To establish mutual understanding on good basis.
- To secure clues about other source of information.
- To begin the slow process of developing self-help and self-reliance.

#### **Contact with his Family and Near Ones**

Within this objective of contacting with the family, Richmond saw the need of an individual not only for assessing the personality and diagnosing the problem, but also to develop a relationship with other members of the family. Richmond felt that attention should be given to family cohesion, unity of family and the capacity of family members towards affection, enjoyment and social development, children’s ambitions and aptitude, interference of relatives and difference in role (expected role and the role played) were to be noted.

#### **Search of Inside and Outside Sources for Collaboration**

For the social diagnosis the outside source of information included social agencies, churches, doctors and health agencies, present and former neighbours, relatives, friends, present and past employers, school, public record, etc., and inside sources were his/her willpower, confidence, self-reliance, attitude, etc.

Miss Richmond recommended that the worker should collect information from these outside sources and he/she should first go to the most prominent factors in client's history and those sources which were likely to influence the client's personality.

### **The Interpretation of Information Collected**

The collected data from the above sources was considered as raw material for diagnosis. Such interpretation is arrived through the careful weighing of evidence and critical comparison. Social evidence was defined by Richmond as "consisting of any and all facts as to personal or family history, which, taken together, indicate the nature of a given client's social difficulties and the means to their solution". She also recognised that the client's own hopes, plans and attitude towards life are more important than any other information.

Richmond made the first exclusive effort to analyse casework process. This was the first truly professional approach in casework. The contribution of Richmond has always been held in respect by modern caseworker because of many reasons. It contains the concept of self-determination which has become very important in modern casework philosophy.

Richmond's interest was dual. On the one hand it was social and on the other hand it was psychological. It was concluded that forces within the individual and outside him/her influence his/her behaviour and his/ her nature in the society. Richmond attempted to combine this dual interest and she suggested that there ought to be a profession called "Sociatry".

### **Contribution of Freudian Theory**

As mentioned earlier during the First World War the influence of psychiatry became strong. Before the advent of psychiatry social casework was practiced as an active art. The caseworker investigated, diagnosed and administered the social services. After being influenced by Freudian theory, social caseworker also provided individual therapy. Feelings, emotions, attitudes, repressed conflicts and dealing with the unconscious became an integral part of social casework understanding and method. Gradually, social work curriculums in the West include psychiatry.

### **Freudian Theory**

Today, as in the past, many social workers---not only those who specialise in psychoanalysis---draw on Freudian theory in their efforts to understand human behaviour. In 1918, the first psychoanalytically oriented school of social work, Smith College School for Social Work, was founded to teach students about Sigmund Freud's ideas and their application to practice, particularly in the treatment of WWI veterans' suffering from trauma due to their war experience. Freud's influence is found in many areas of casework. His greatest influence was however on caseworker-client relationship. Previously clients were persuaded, convinced or even coerced into accepting the caseworkers' suggestions and ideas. But now the caseworker worked with client by listening and honoring the client's self-expression.

Informally, a few psychoanalysts did provide training and supervision to social workers and in 1948 social workers were first accepted at the psychoanalytic institutes of the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis, and the Postgraduate Centre for Mental Health, both in New York. Organisations such as the American Psychoanalytic Association, which earlier had prevented social workers, dropped their prohibitions against admitting social workers.

The basic concepts of Freudian theory are as mentioned below:

#### ***Unconscious Mind***



Through his experience with hypnosis and study of dreams, Freud found a world of hidden mentality, which he called the “Unconscious”. Many of the social workers that came into contact with Freud’s concept of unconsciousness, and psychiatry began to introduce these concepts into social work.

***Ambivalence***

The thinking of men is divided into two parts and Freud noted that these two parts were often in conflict with each other. To understand the ambivalence he explained that, one could love and hate simultaneously, one could have fear and courage at the same time, etc.

***The Past***

Freud observed that there were many conflicts between past experience and present attitude of a person. That is why in order to treat the conflict one should know the history of conflict.

***Transference***

Transference refers to any distortion of a present relationship because of unresolved (and mostly unconscious) issues left over from earlier relationship (s).

***Resistance***

Resistance refers to the resistance to interpretation of transference.

The major conceptions of Freudian theory are:

- 1) Unconscious mind is the determinant of behaviour.
- 2) Ambivalence in feeling and attitude.
- 3) Past experience determines the present behaviour of the person.
- 4) The recognition of the phenomenon of transference in psycho-therapy
- 5) Resistance to interpretation of transference to be dealt in all helping process.

Freud’s three disciples Alfred Adler, Carl Jung and Otto Rank have developed schools of their own. Adler was instrumental in establishing the first child guidance clinic in Vienna. Adler introduced the system of “individual psychology”. Jung has given analytical psychology and emphasised a relationship with the therapist and therapeutic factor. Otto Rank practiced as a therapist and wrote extensively on technical as well as on cultural aspects of psychoanalysis and gives emphasis on psychotherapeutic philosophy.

**Check Your Progress III**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) What are the major conceptions of Freudian theory?

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## 1.7 VALUE OF SOCIAL CASEWORK WITHIN THE SPHERE OF SOCIAL WORK

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We know that social casework as method of social work aims at helping individual to solve his/her problems in the society to perform in a better way and to enhance his/her own capabilities. The basic unit of society is individual. If individuals are satisfied in their life and efforts are made to minimise maladjustment then it leads to formation of a peaceful society. Since society consists of individuals it consequently will help individuals to lead a peaceful life.

Every profession has a tested body of knowledge for its own growth and development. This body of knowledge should be easily understandable and communicable and should include principles, techniques, method, procedure, tools and terminology of its own. The social work as profession has developed a body of knowledge, which includes methods and tools, and terminologies of its own. In the sphere of social work casework as a method which demands a dual orientation. Firstly, the orientation in human psychology, secondly an orientation in knowing cultural forces of the society in which it works.

Initially social casework was practiced in a few agencies and institutions but it has been increasingly utilised in newer settings. Today there are many agencies, institutions and organisations, which frequently use social casework. It is practiced in hospitals, clinics, courts, industries, military organisations, family welfare agencies both government and voluntary, immigrant agencies, day nurseries and schools, adoption agencies, child guidance clinics, hygiene organisation, health organisation, etc.

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## 1.8 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit, we have studied the concept of casework, i.e., casework for an individual as well as general welfare, basic and philosophical assumptions of casework, its functioning in the society, etc. We further studied the historical development of casework in West, its roots in the form of the concept of charity, then its journey from Friendly Visitors to modern professional caseworkers. Then we studied the development of casework in India. Contribution of different religions and development of case work during the British period and starting of professional social work with establishment of schools of social work in India. We also studied the impact of the World Wars, contributions of Mary Richmond and Freud in the history of casework development.

Apart from the above topics we also studied about the individual needs, i.e., his/her basic needs, physical needs, psychological needs, etc., and about the distress caused by non-fulfillment of needs. Then we discussed about the problems faced by individuals and families in their day-to-day life and the role of caseworker in resolving the problems, followed by the scope of casework in social work. Casework as a tool of dealing with individual has become an important method of social work.

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## 1.9 KEY WORDS

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<b>Client</b>	:	A consumer or the buyer of services provided by caseworker.
<b>Caseworker</b>	:	The person who deals with the case or problem of an individual and study, analyse and treat the case in order to help him.
<b>Welfare Agency</b>	:	An institute especially for the well being of its clients.
<b>Contribution</b>	:	Value addition or the inputs made.

<b>Social Work</b>	:	To work in the society for the upliftment of society.
<b>Individual</b>	:	A person or a human being.
<b>Welfare</b>	:	The status of overall well-being.
<b>Assumptions</b>	:	They are the concepts, which cannot be proved through scientific method.
<b>Charity</b>	:	A helping activity to assist somebody.

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## 1.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Hamilton, Gordon (1940), *Theory and Practice of Social Case Work*, Columbia University Press, New York.

Mathew, Grace (1991), *An Introduction to Social Work*, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

Richmond Mary (1917), *Social Diagnosis*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York.

*Scope & Methods of the Family Service Agency* (1953), Family Service Association of America, New York.

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## 1.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress I

- 1) The main types of problems faced by individuals can be categorised on the basis of the causes which are:
  - Lack of material resources
  - Misunderstanding regarding situations and relationships
  - Health related problems
  - Consequences of stressful situation
  - Personality deficiencies

### Check Your Progress II

- 1) The Friendly Visitors were volunteers who visited poor families to assess their needs and provide help. The role of the Friendly Visitor was seen as educational. It is through this concept that scientific charity evolved and with it casework.

### Check Your Progress III

- 1) The major conceptions of Freudian theory can be listed as:
  - a) Unconscious mind as a determinant of behaviour
  - b) Ambivalence in feeling and attitude
  - c) Past experience play an important role in the behaviour of a person
  - d) Importance of transference and counter transference

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## UNIT 2      **BASICS OF SOCIAL CASEWORK**

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*\*Anna Mathew*

### **Contents**

- 2.0    Objectives
- 2.1    Introduction
- 2.2    Principles of Social Casework
- 2.3    Schools of Social Casework
- 2.4    Theories of Social Casework
- 2.5    Let Us Sum Up
- 2.6    Key Words
- 2.7    Suggested Readings
- 2.8    Answers to Check Your Progress

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### **2.0    OBJECTIVES**

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The basic objective of this unit is to develop the skills to enhance the capacities of clients for solution of their psycho-social problems in such a way so that they find themselves capable of dealing with problems of present as well as the future. After studying and analysing this unit, the students will be able to gain knowledge of the:

- Basic principles of social casework and their significance in establishing relationship with the client;
- Schools of thought in working with the client;
- Theories or models of working with the individual client;
- Importance of establishing relationship with the client; and
- Techniques of changing of client's attitude and modification of behaviour for solving his/her problems

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### **2.1    INTRODUCTION**

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Social casework, a primary method of social work is concerned with development of the individual towards better adjustment with social realities and more satisfying human relations. But his/her adjustment and development depend on the use of available resources by him both externally and within him. Sometimes due to certain factors, internal or external he/she fails to avail existing facilities. In such a situation social caseworker by using different resources; both material and human, helps the client. But before applying different techniques to the client in solving his/her psycho-social

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problems, he/she is required to know the theoretical framework of social casework practice. There are certain principles of social casework practice and these principles are the guidelines to work with client. These principles have been discussed here. Diagnostic and functional schools of thought have been explained along with the difference between the two. Theories and models of working with the individuals have been elucidated in the present unit.

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## 2.2 PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL CASEWORK

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The principles of social casework are applied in establishing close relationship between social caseworker and the client. Relationship is the medium through which changes are brought in the behaviour and personality of the client. The term relationship in social casework was used for the first time by Miss Virginia Robinson in her book, "A Changing Psychology in Social Case Work" in 1939. The social casework relationship is the dynamic interaction of attitudes and emotions between the social caseworker and the client with the purpose of helping the client to achieve a better adjustment between himself and his/her environment. Thus, the purpose of establishing relationship is to help the client with his/her psycho-social needs and problems. The relationship between caseworker and client may be more strengthened by using certain principles. These principles are:

- 1) Principle of individualisation
- 2) Principle of meaningful relationship
- 3) Principle of acceptance
- 4) Principle of communication
- 5) Principle of expression of feelings
- 6) Principle of controlled emotional involvement
- 7) Principle of non-judgmental attitude
- 8) Principle of client's self-determination
- 9) Principle of worker's self-awareness
- 10) Principle of social functioning
- 11) Principle of tuning behaviour
- 12) Principle of social learning
- 13) Principle of confidentiality
- 14) Principle of Non condemning attitude

### 1) Principle of individualisation

No two persons are alike in all qualities and traits. Their problems may be the same but the cause of the problem, the perception towards the problem and ego strength differs in every individual. Therefore, each individual client should be treated as a separate entity and complete information is required to establish close relations in order to solve his/her problem from the root.

### 2) Principle of meaningful relationship

The purpose of establishing relationship in social casework is to change the behaviour of the client or help the client to achieve adjustment in maladjusted situation. Meaningful relationship is developed in social casework by demonstrating the interest in the client. He/she is convinced of the caseworker's

warmth as an individual and conveys respect and caring for him/her. In return, the caseworker helps the client to trust in his/her objectivity and feel secured as a worthwhile individual.

### **3) Principle of acceptance**

Social caseworker accepts the client as she/he is and with all his/her limitations. He/she believes that acceptance is the crux of all help. He/she does not condemn or feel hostile towards a client because his/her behaviour differs from the approved one. Later on, he/ she tries to modify the client's behaviour step by step.

### **4) Principle of communication**

Communication is a two-way process. There must be proper communication between caseworker and the client, which helps in proper understanding of each other. It is the road to the identification of the client's problem. The function of social caseworker is primarily to create an environment in which the client feels comfortable in giving expression to his/her feelings. This primarily depends on how comfortable the caseworker makes the client feel through proper communication.

### **5) Principle of expression of feelings**

Purposeful expression of feelings is the recognition of the client's need to express his/her feelings freely, especially his/her negative feelings. The caseworker listens purposefully, neither discouraging nor condemning the expression of those feelings. Sometimes he/she even stimulates and encourages them when the expression is of therapeutic nature.

### **6) The Principle of controlled emotional involvement**

The social caseworker tries to understand the client's feelings and emotions but he/she himself/herself does not get emotionally involved in the client's problems.

### **7) Principle of non-judgmental attitude**

The non-judgmental attitude is a quality of the casework relationship. The caseworker neither blames the client for his/her problem nor does he assign any responsibility to the client for his/her miseries. He/she only evaluates the attitudes, behaviour or action of the client.

### **8) Principle of client self-determination**

The client's self-determination is the practical recognition of the right and need of client's freedom in making his/her own choices and decisions. But this right is limited by the client's capacity for positive and constructive decision making.

### **9) Principle of self-awareness**

It means that the caseworker should know his/her own strengths and limitations in dealing with client's problems. If he/she feels that the problems of the client are beyond his/her capacity, the client should be referred to the appropriate authority.

### **10) Principle of social functioning**

Social functioning means the functioning of the individual in his/her social roles and relationships, with emphasis on his/her relation to the environment. The caseworker tries to assess the roles of the client and his/her capacity to perform these roles.

### **11) Principle of tuning behaviour**

Man has body, mind and intellect as three instruments of experiences through which life constantly pulsates. These three instruments have their own distinct characteristics in each person. Hence each person has unique personality. There is need of tuning three instruments for right perception and thinking. The social caseworker facilitates this process in the client.

### 12) Principle of social learning

Social learning is a pre-requisite to the changes that are inevitably involved in problem- solving. The social learning processes involves (1) arousing and focusing attention and concern, (2) organising and evaluating the problem and planning future action, (3) searching for and acquiring new information, (4) providing opportunities to the client for new experience.

### 13) Principle of confidentiality

Confidentiality is the preservation of the secret and personal information concerning the client, which is disclosed to the case worker in the professional relationship only.

#### Check Your Progress I

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) List five principles of casework.

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## 2.3 SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL CASEWORK

In the beginning, the aim of social work was to help but later on, due to influence of psychology and psychiatry, personality and behaviour treatment have also been added as the objective of social casework. Based on the different kinds of orientation of social caseworkers, diagnostic and functional schools have evolved in the practice of social casework.

### Diagnostic School

The diagnostic school is basically founded on the Freudian theory of psychoanalysis. Mary Richmond gave shape to these thoughts in the form of a school. She wrote her first book on social casework, i.e., Social Diagnosis in 1917. The other contributors of this school were Marion Kenworthy (New York School of Social Work), Betsey Libbey (Family Society of Philadelphia), Gordon Hamilton, Bertha Reynolds, Charlotte Towle, Florence Day and Annette Garrett.

The Diagnostic school is based on the following main foundations:

#### *Principles of Diagnosis*

Social casework help is based on the individually understanding of each client and his/her problems. It is essential because it gives a realistic basis for differentiation, and a base for the improvement of the client's social situation and personal satisfaction and adjustment.

The diagnosis is based on the following principles:

- 1) The diagnostic process consists of a critical study of the client and his/her situation and the trouble concerning which help is sought or needed, for the purpose of understanding the nature of the difficulty, with increasing details and accuracy.
- 2) Diagnosis is based on the knowledge of the worker about the interplay of social and psychological factors affecting the client.

The knowledge of interaction between inner and outer forces influencing the client makes the process of diagnosis helpful and therapeutic. Every problem of the individual should be understood in the light of multiple factors theory.

In the initial stage also, relieving of pressure of stresses and strains on the client, helps the caseworker to arrive at a proper diagnosis.

The initial appraisal of personality and motivations and their significance in the development of client's problem provides the basis for planning the treatment of the client's problems.

For the solution of the problem of the client, it is of utmost importance to gain some knowledge of his/ her current capacity to work and to recognise the motivating forces in his/her behaviour.

The understanding of the psycho-dynamics and the pathological symptoms of the personality of the client provides the basis of determining the kind of help that can be appropriately offered.

### ***Principles of Treatment***

The main objective of the treatment is of alleviating the client's distress and decreasing the malfunctioning in the person-situation system. The above objective is achieved by enhancing the adaptive skills of his/her ego and functioning of the person-situation system. It is based on certain principles :

- 1) The focus of the discussion in the interview is centred on the problem and ways of resolving it. Attention is paid to know the obstacles both situational and behavioural that stand in the way of the solution.
- 2) Nature and extent of both social and psychological factors differ in each situation.
- 3) Treatment goals and techniques are planned after a careful study of the particular needs of the client.
- 4) The success of the treatment programme is based on the utilisation of the relationship purposefully.
- 5) Social therapy and psychotherapy are the two broad classifications of social casework treatment.

### ***Use of Techniques***

The techniques include encouraging, emotional discharge, reassurance, support, suggestion, guidance and direction, provision of new experiences, clarification, interpretation, etc.

### ***Use of Relationship***



The relationship is the medium of treatment through which client is enabled to find new ways of perceiving his/her problems and of handling himself.

### **Functional School**

The functional approach to social casework practice was developed by the Faculty Members of the School of the University of Pennsylvania. This approach is based on the personality theory of Otto Rank. According to Functional School, social casework is a method of helping people through special services given by social agencies in such way that the experience of using such services may be psychologically constructive. Thus the functional school of social casework has two inseparable aspects:

- 1) The potential for help to a person is inherent in the existence of service. In spite of the differences in the clients and ways of using of agencies services, the kind of service an agency gives and their purposes remain the same.
- 2) The use of agency service gives psychological experience that differs from the form of another kind of service regardless of the similarity of problem in the people using the two services.

### ***Diagnosis***

The diagnosis is most effective. It is related to the need for some specific service, which is developed in the course of giving the service. This school does not recognise the significance of understanding the total situation of the client. Functional diagnosis recognises that people cannot be categorised and a plan with a specific kind of service may deny potential growth and change. In establishing a diagnostic conclusion, each individual makes his/her own diagnosis of himself. Diagnosis is a way of engaging in a human relationship process, which frees the help seeker to determine his/ her own goal for himself/herself. The client is the centre for change capable of continuous growth and development.

### ***Treatment***

Functional school prefers to use the term helping process, rather than treatment. Social caseworker is not responsible for treating someone who is the passive recipient of treatment because the school believes that the centre for change resides in the client itself. Social casework through the agency service seeks to release power for improved social functioning.

The process of establishing and using a diagnosis serves as the part of casework helping. Total social casework process includes three stages or three time phases: beginning, middle and ending.

In the beginning phase, the caseworker establishes relationship by removing all the hindrances that come in the way of understanding the client or by the client to the caseworker. He/she also tries to understand the client's needs, desires, motives, interests and hopes for future. He/she also divides the problem of the client and put them in order of priority. The client starts to take services from the agency. In the middle stage the responsibility of the client increases and the relation becomes more evolved. The last stage is of separation of client from the caseworker. It is a difficult process. Sometimes client does not like to terminate the service due to emotional connection with the worker. The social caseworker with all his/her abilities and capacities tries on one hand not to harm client's feelings and on the other hand to ensure that the client may go happily. Caseworker gives the client a chance to become conscious of his/her readiness to leave, so that he/she can leave the agency without hopelessness and fear.

### Difference between Diagnostic and Functional School

- 1) Diagnostic school follows the theory of personality developed by Sigmund Freud whereas functional school is based on the theory of ‘will’ developed by Otto Rank.
- 2) Diagnostic school believes that personality is a composite of many interacting forces, reacting not only with each other but also influences the social environment favourably or unfavourably. The strength and the nature of balance of these forces are the result of individual’s experiences primarily of his/her relationship to parents and the significant others. The functional school also believes that the process of development of personality takes place due to the interaction of inner needs and environmental experiences, but such an interaction takes place and is directed by the human being’s inborn will to individual development and autonomy.
- 3) According to diagnostic school, the ego is the chief of psychic energy, the strength of which is determined largely by the favourable or unfavourable course of one’s psycho-social environment. But according to functional school, the ego (self) is the result of the creative use of inner and outer experience through the ‘will’ and is not the product of interaction of inner and outer forces.
- 4) In the diagnostic view, the goal of treatment is to increase the individual’s ego capacity whereas functional school tends to direct the case worker’s effort towards helping the client to release his/her inner capacity of feeling, organising and acting.
- 5) Total information about the client’s ego functions, total personality, motivating forces, reality pressures and his/her current feelings is essential according to diagnostic view for enabling the client to take part in the therapeutic relationship. Functional school gives emphasis on the client’s feelings in the immediate situation which includes both his/her problem and the casework relationship through which he/she may solve the problem, other information are secondary.
- 6) Diagnostic School believes in doing planned and goal directed help to the client –both psychological and social. Functional school gives full freedom to the client to give direction to his/her own process of change. Agency services are made available.
- 7) The Diagnostic School accepts responsibility for apprising client’s capacities and weaknesses and for organising and arranging measures for self development. The functional school believes in the client’s right for choices and goals because of the constructive value of the use of self.

#### Check Your Progress II

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) Write three differences between diagnostic and functional schools.

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## 2.4 THEORIES OF SOCIAL CASEWORK

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Theories or models give the direction to the caseworker to handle the client in a way which is suited according to the client's need and social conditions.

- **I) Social Theory**

Psycho-social theory was propounded by Hamilton. She published an article on "The Underlying Philosophy of Social Case Work" in 1941 in which the word 'diagnostic' was used to express psycho-social problems. In this approach, diagnosis and treatment are directed toward person in situation. The client is seen in the context of his/her interactions and transactions with the outer world. For proper diagnosis and treatment client's social context must be understood and mobilised. Treatment must be differentiated according to the need of the client. Three stages are involved in psycho-social approach.

### *Psycho-social Study*

Social Caseworker starts his/her work with the knowledge of the needs of the client. He/she on the basis of the needs, assesses what kind of help his/her needs. He/she also finds out the perception of the client about his/her own problem, and his/her desires about the kind of assistance to be provided. He/she, then, himself/herself tries to arrive at his/her own understanding of what the client's trouble is, what factors contribute to it and what type of service is needed to improve his/her ego strength and adaptability.

### *Diagnosis*

On the basis of the collected data and available material social caseworker tries to assess the nature of client's trouble contributing factors and where changes can be brought in his/her behaviour without much efforts.

### *Treatment*

Social Caseworker gives much emphasis on indirect treatment or environmental modification. He/she intervenes actively in the environment and provides necessary concrete help to the client. He/she provides financial help by locating such agency, proper health care and also educational resources. Direct treatment is also provided for the ventilation of the client to accept concrete help. Psychological support, counselling, suggestions, etc., techniques are used to establish close relations with the client.

## **II) Behaviour Modification Theory**

Behaviour modification theory is based upon the principles of learning and conditioning propounded by Pavlov and Thorndike. The researches of B.F. Skinner helped to develop the behaviour modification approach further. The behaviouristic theory viewed problem essentially as the result of a failure to learn necessary adaptive behaviours and competencies and/or the learning of ineffective and maladaptive behaviours. Conflicting situations may require an individual to make decisions of which he/she feels incapable or discriminate against something/ someone about which/ whom he /she does not have much knowledge. The maladjusted person has learned faulty coping patterns, which are being maintained by some kind of reinforcement, and he/ she has failed to learn needed competencies for coping with the problem he/she is facing in life.

### **Techniques of Behaviour Modification**

The following techniques are used for behaviour modification:

### ***Simple Extinction***

In this technique, the reinforcement is removed to eliminate a maladaptive pattern of behaviour. This is especially helpful where maladaptive behaviour is being reinforced unknowingly by others. Through this technique, learned behaviour patterns are made weaker and disappear overtime.

### ***Systematic Desensitisation***

It is a technique to deal with a wide variety of maladaptive emotional behaviours, particularly involving anxiety, irrational fears and phobias and other forms of dysfunctions, i.e., neurotic tendencies. There are five basic steps in systematic desensitisation: (1) assessment, (2) construction of anxiety hierarchies, (3) training in muscle relaxation, (4) imaginary training, and (5) implementation.

### ***Impulsive Therapy***

In this technique, instead of banishing anxiety, the social caseworker attempts to elicit a massive flood of anxiety. With repeated exposure in a safe setting where no harm is felt by the client, the stimulus loses its strength to elicit anxiety.

### ***Assertive Therapy***

It is needed to develop more effective coping mechanism. In such therapy, the opportunity is given to the client for role-playing.

### ***Aversion Therapy***

This technique is used for the modification of undesirable behaviour by the method of punishment. Punishment may involve either the removal of positive reinforcements or the use of aversive stimuli.

### ***Family Therapy***

Family is a system which is composed of three sub systems: marriage, parenthood and siblings. There are continuous interactions and transactions among these sub systems. It is quite often observed that sometimes relations may not be harmonious and at that time outside help is required to bring the family on right track.

Family therapy is based on the assumption that marital relationship system influences the family adjustment and therefore it is necessary to understand the nature of marriage. It is also true that the nature of the marital equilibrium affects all family members but its effect differs on each of the member. The development of children is also affected by the nature of the marital equilibrium because they idolise the parents as models and guides. Further, since childhood, each developmental phase of an individual has stressful situation and requires support of new relationships (parents, peers (same sex), opposite sex members, etc.)

Family therapy is significant because whenever one member of a family is in trouble, each and every other member gets affected directly or indirectly and all are in trouble. Communication in the family is the channel through which members of the family interact. Whenever there is problem in the family, communication channel becomes faulty or dysfunctional.

In family therapy, the diagnosis is confirmed on the basis of various types of interviews with the client and family. The social caseworker tries to know the family structure, and the processes in the family, responsibilities, role patterns of daily living, role performance, role relationship, dependency, separateness, independence level, capacity, tolerance and control of feelings, intimacy, anxiety, regression, taboo, etc. He/she records the family history and analyses its contents.

The social caseworker uses most of the techniques in one to one treatment, such as guidance, advice, education, suggestion, clarification, and interpretations.

### ***Self-control and Self Management Therapy***

Helping clients to help themselves is an old casework phrase. Self-control refers to the ability of individuals to change behavioural patterns that they or others perceive as harmful. The role of social caseworker in this process is to help the client to develop the knowledge about how, when and where to use strategies for change. The worker acts as an instigator and motivator to help the client to start the programme and have motivating force to complete it. A multi-step guide has been presented by Watson and Tharp to develop a self-control plan.

- 1) List a current dissatisfaction.
- 2) Select one particular problem of behaviour that occurs in a particular situation.
- 3) Describe the effect of problem on behaviour.
- 4) Be as precise as possible in stating the behaviour that occurs and the situation in which it occurs.
- 5) Gather baseline data. Count every instance of target behaviour and keep a record of count.
- 6) Catalogue reinforcements. Answer three questions for each potential reinforcer. (a) Is it a reinforcement or specially formed, (b) Is it a strong reinforcer? (c) Is it accessible?
- 7) List and attempt to verify through observation possible antecedents to problem behaviours. Devise a plan for intervention for altering antecedents.
- 8) Document the emotional components of the problem and plan for desensitisation.
- 9) Select one of the plans that you have developed.
- 10) Continue to collect data on the problem behaviour. Make a graph of the data to determine that the intervention plan is working.
- 11) If the plan is successful, consider termination of relationship.

### ***The Problem Solving Theory***

This theory was propounded by Helen Harris Perlman in the book "Social Case Work: A Problem-Solving Process". This model stands firmly upon the recognition that life is an outgoing problem encountering – problem solving process. Every person is involved every time in coping with his/her problems. Sometimes he/she is capable of coping and sometimes fails to resolve the crisis situation. Through problem solving process, individual or family is helped to cope with or resolve some difficulty that he/she is currently finding difficult to solve. Thus, the primary goal of problem solving model is to help a person cope as effectively as possible with such problems in carrying social tasks.

In the initial phase, attempts are made to engage the client with his/her problems and to do something about it in a working relationship with the agency. The problem solving process starts at once, from the first movement with treating the person. The client is not treated for his/her problem but he is treated for the purpose of helping him/her to know himself / herself, i.e., strengths and weaknesses and how to remove those weaknesses.

In short, the problem- solving casework process involves the following steps:

- 1) It tries to release, energise and give directions to the client's motivation for change.

- 2) It tries to release and exercise the client's mental, emotional and action capacities for coping with the problem.
- 3) It tries to find and make accessible to the client such aids and resources as are necessary to the solution of the problem.

### ***Role Theory***

Role is mainly a behavioural concept. Role may be seen as a product of an interplay between (i) individual member's needs and resources, (ii) the solution in the social network, and (iii) the forces acting on the social network from the environment. When there are internal or external difficulties, which are beyond the capacity of an individual, he/she feels the problem and fails to perform his/her role.

Social caseworker with such clients suggests new ideas and ways of facing the problem and suggests solution for a difficulty that the external factors have encountered. He/she offers facts, which relate to his/ her own experience for understanding the problem. He/ she gives suggestions in terms of examples, and tries to explain how suggestions would work if followed by the client. He/she mediates between other members, attempts to reconcile disagreements, and relieves tension in conflict situation. His/her efforts are also directed to keep communication channels open by encouraging others to participate in the business of the client.

### ***Rational Emotive Therapy***

This technique is used in the area of modifying the control of irrational elements over the self. Some of the irrational ideas at the core of emotional and behavioural problems are as follows:

- 1) It is dire necessity for an adult to be loved by everyone for everything he/she does.
- 2) Certain acts are awful or wicked, and people who perform such acts should be severely punished.
- 3) It is horrible when things are not the way one would like them to be.
- 4) It is easier to avoid rather than face life's difficulties and self-responsibilities.
- 5) One needs something stronger or greater than one self on which to rely.
- 6) Human happiness can be achieved by inertia and inaction.
- 7) One has virtually no control over one's emotions and one cannot help feeling certain things.

Rational Emotive Therapy includes four stages:

#### ***1) Presentation of Rationale***

The worker attempts to elicit the problems or significance of self-statements in general without mentioning the client's problems.

#### ***2) Overview of Irrational Assumption***

The worker presents a number of irrational self-statements before the client and tries to make the client realise that his/her statements are irrational.

#### ***3) Analysis of Client's Problem in Rational Emotive Terms***

Client is made aware of his/her problem rationally and is provided with the knowledge of how he/she has labeled the event.

#### ***4) Helping the Client to Modify Internal Statement***

In this stage the client is taught to change his/her opinions and attitudes which are anxiety provoking.

### Check Your Progress III

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) Describe Systematic Desensitisation Therapy.

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## 2.5 LET US SUM UP

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The different principles, which are significant in the practice of social casework, have been analysed here. If the social worker working with the individual follows these principles, he/she will be more useful to the client and will be able to perform his/her job efficiently. There are two schools of approaches in social casework ---diagnostic and functional --- are practiced in social casework. These have been highlighted with their main features. Certain important theories or models of social casework practice have also been narrated in this unit.

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## 2.6 KEY WORDS

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### **Counselling**

: It is a personal help directed towards the solution of a problem, which a person finds difficult to solve. It is always used for some particular purpose like marriage counseling, family counselling, etc.

### **Therapeutic Interviewing**

: It is used where intra-psychic conflict is projected to the social environment. It is also used with neurotic patient or with behaviour disorders patient. For the analysis of the unconscious, techniques of free association, dream interpretation, analysis of resistance and transference are applied.

### **Psychic Energy**

: It is an internal or psychological power of an individual, which gives him stimulus to work in the direction as required. It is determined largely by the favourable or unfavourable course of one's psycho-social development.

### **Relationship**

: The relationship is the medium in social casework through which help is provided to the client.

### **Communication**

Communication is the medium through which an individual understands the personal and social

environment of the client. When there is any fault in communication, problem arises.

**Social Diagnosis** : Social diagnosis is the attempt to reach the exact definition of client's social problem. There are three types of diagnosis-dynamic, clinical and etiological.

**Social Treatment** : Social treatment is the sum total of all activities and services directed towards helping a client with a problem. Three treatment methods are applied: (1) administration of public services, and (2) environmental modification, (3) direct treatment-counselling, therapeutic interviewing, insight development, psychological support, etc.

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## 2.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

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## 2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress I

- 1) Principle of acceptance
- 2) Principle of meaningful relationship
- 3) Principle of communication
- 4) Principle of controlled emotional involvement
- 5) Principle of non-judgmental attitude

### Check Your Progress II

- 1) Diagnostic School follows the theory of personality developed by Sigmund Freud whereas functional school is based on the theory of 'will' developed by Otto Rank.



Secondly, Diagnostic School believes that personality is a composite of many interacting forces, reacting not only with each other but also influences the social environment favourably or unfavourably. The functional school also believes that the process of development of personality takes place due to the interaction of inner needs and environmental experiences, but such an interaction takes place and is directed by the human being's inborn will to individual development and autonomy. Thirdly in the diagnostic view, the goal of treatment is to increase the individual's ego capacity whereas functional school tends to direct the caseworker's effort towards helping the client to release his/her inner capacity of feeling, organising and acting.

### **Check Your Progress III**

- 1) Systematic desensitisation is a technique to deal with a wide variety of maladaptive emotional behaviours, particularly involving anxiety, irrational fears and phobias and other forms of dysfunctions, i.e., neurotic tendencies. There are five basic steps in systematic desensitisation: (1) assessment, (2) construction of anxiety hierarchies, (3) training in muscle relaxation, (4) imaginary training, and (5) implementation. Impulsive Therapy attempts to elicit a massive flood of anxiety. With repeated exposure in a safe setting where no harm is felt by the client, the stimulus loses its strength to elicit anxiety.

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## UNIT 3 PRACTICE OF SOCIAL CASEWORK

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\* Prof. P.D. Misra

### Contents

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Brief History of the Social Casework Process
- 3.4 Study, Assessment, Intervention, Termination, Evaluation and their Application to Social Casework Practice
- 3.5 Case Illustration
- 3.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.7 Key Words
- 3.8 Suggested Readings
- 3.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 3.0 OBJECTIVES

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This unit provides a basic understanding of the process of social casework practice. At first, we will explore the history of social casework. In the next section, we examine the need for further developing the phase of the social casework process in the light of new areas of concern. In the third section, we will discuss the various stages of the social casework process and their relationship, followed by their application to social work practice. The unit concludes with a case illustration depicting each phase of the social casework process. Study of this unit is expected to enable the student to understand:

- The history of the social casework process;
- The importance of the relationship between the phases of the social casework process;
- The application of Study, Assessment, Intervention, Termination, Evaluation to social casework practice; and
- The case illustration related to each phase of the casework process.

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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So far, we have seen that social casework addresses itself to the solution of problems that block or minimise the effectiveness of the individual in various roles. In a society of rapid change and development, the scientific base and the knowledge and philosophical assumptions regarding the worth and value of the individual have not changed. However, new theories and new models of practice have developed in response to the experience of practitioners to the many situations they

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encounter. As Florence Hollis states in her article, “The Psychosocial Approach to the Practice of Casework” (1972), that casework concepts are dynamic, they change, grow and develop as they are shaped by new experience and knowledge.

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### **3.2 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CASEWORK PROCESS**

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Mary Richmond may be thought of as the conceptual founder of casework. In 1917, in her book, “Social Diagnosis”, she described the three basic steps in the theory of social work practice. They are (a) Investigation or Fact finding, (b) Diagnosis, and (c) Treatment. The process, according to Richmond began with the gathering of evidence or investigation followed by a critical examination and comparison of evidence. The second step was the diagnosis, wherein an attempt was made to arrive at a definition of the social situation, knowledge of the causes and personality of a given client. Last came its interpretation and the definition of the social difficulty. Richmond used the word diagnosis more frequently when describing the whole process; she felt that the word diagnosis was a better word than investigation as the former belonged to the end of the process. However, social work writers like Florence Hollis, Evelyn Davison and several others expressed that the term diagnosis had been borrowed from medicine and therefore gave a false impression of the caseworker. It led to the necessity for discovering the etiology of each “illness” as though it were some internal infection. Then treatment was focused on dealing with some internal bacterium that was causing some symptoms of fever and aches and pains. The caseworker does not diagnose pathology and prescribe a remedy, but working alongside the client, seeks gradually to come to an understanding of the client and his/her problem. Diagnosis in medicine, according to the critics suggests a completed appraisal before treatment, which may not be true in casework. In casework both diagnosis and treatment proceed together. Since client worker relationship is the medium through which help is offered, treatment begins at the moment when the client and the worker first meet, and continues as long as the case remains active. Since clients and problems are ever changing, diagnosis in casework must also be a continuing process. Besides, when treatment was used as the almost partner of the term ‘diagnosis’, it was felt that the worker manipulated the client- doing something to the client rather than with him/her. The idea of partnership was lacking as also the respect for the client’s right to direct his/her affairs.

Caseworkers for several years attempted to use the knowledge about the causes. It served as an aid in understanding the development of behaviour. It was also used as a substitute for intervention knowledge on the assumption that understanding how a problem came about also provides information about how to change that problem. For instance, understanding a body of knowledge such as the Freudian theory was sufficient for carrying out treatment or intervention. Very soon casework critics realised that causal knowledge is not often related to treatment or intervention knowledge rather it cannot be equated with treatment. What was needed was to have a separate and an entirely different set of principles and procedures to carry out an intervention. Several writers like Gordon Hamilton, Hollis, Turner and others evolved various sets of procedures and techniques of intervention for guiding change in clients.

Gradually the approach faced changes as it was influenced by the socio-economic events of the 1920’s and 1930’s, as well as by the growth of social theory. It redirected its attention to the fact that individuals live in a world of here and now, or in a series of situations. Living in a series of situations means “interaction is going on between an individual and other people”. Subsequently the use of the principle of interaction brought with it the dynamic conception of social casework as a process of helping.

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### **3.3 PHASES IN THE SOCIAL CASEWORK PROCESS**

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Study, assessment, intervention, termination and evaluation are the main divisions of the social casework process. They are the threads of the process that will continue to be interwoven throughout the social casework process. We, as social workers would logically place study, assessment,

intervention, termination and evaluation in that order. Actually, these steps are not performed in sequence, and as Gordon Hamilton said they are woven in and out, one process paralleling another. She further explained that we may make a tentative or temporary diagnosis in the beginning and even plan out a treatment. However, our minds go on drawing inferences and we continue in the preparation of the study to understand the client better. Intervention or treatment begins with the first contact. According to Skidmore, the study process is treatment when it helps the client to clarify the problem for him or herself, and to make changes in or her life situation resulting from this understanding. Since our assessment is on 'persons' and not 'problems', so while we are trying to understand the nature of the problem, we are also trying to understand what sort of a person is having the problem. So, understanding the person is a continuous process. As long as the assessment continues the phases of study, intervention, termination and evaluation continue to recur. The phases may overlap and may proceed simultaneously. However, there tends to be an emphasis in time on one or the other. Although, specific stages are not the rule, the processes, though interwoven, should be stated in orderly stages of procedure or the case may lose its focus and may drift.

## **B. Components of Social Casework Process**

The nucleus of the casework event is this; a person with a problem comes to a place where a professional representative helps him by a given process. Thus, there are four components of casework.

### **1. The Person**

The person is a man, woman or child or anyone who finds himself/herself or is found to be-in need of help in some aspect of his social-emotional living, whether the need be for tangible provisions or counsel. As he/she begins to receive help he/she is called a client. A client is one who seeks professional help, one who employs the help of another or one who is served by a social agency or an institution.

One of the major tasks of the worker is to understand the client as a unique person in a unique situation. There can never be total knowledge about a client; that is impossible. The worker seeks knowledge about the client that is needed for giving the service to be delivered. The client is the major source of the facts used to develop the understanding of the person in the situation.

### **2. The Problem**

Problem in social work usage refers to a social-functioning situation in which need fulfillment of any of the persons or systems involved is blocked or has a significant potential of blockage, and in which the person involved cannot by themselves remove the block to need fulfillment.

### **3. The Place**

The place is a social service agency or a social service department within which the caseworker practices; viz. the psychiatric social work department in a mental hospital, schools, child guidance clinics, children's departments of the hospitals and courts and so on. The most important aspect of agency function is that it constitutes the meeting point of social worker and the client; it is what brings them together and gives meaning and sustenance of their continued contact.

### **4. The Process**

The process is a progressive transaction between the caseworker and the client. It consists of a series of problem solving operations carried out within a meaningful relationship. The end of this process is contained in its means; to so influence the client-person that he/she develops effectiveness in coping

with his/her problem and/or to so influence the problem as to resolve it or reduce its effects. As the social worker develops skills in the problem-solving process, thinking about the phenomena being confronted will begin to take place in orderly steps. These steps appear to be simple but are quite complex in application.

The first part of the casework process, is to ascertain and clarify the facts of the problem. The second aspect of casework problem-solving grows out of and interweaves with the ongoing eliciting of facts, it is thinking through the facts. The conclusive phase of each problem-solving effort in casework is the making of some choice or decision.

### **Check Your Progress I**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answers.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) Briefly trace the history of social casework process.

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1) What are the different phases of the casework practice? Explain their relationship to one another.

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## **3.4 STUDY, ASSESSMENT, INTERVENTION, TERMINATION, EVALUATION AND THEIR APPLICATIONS TO SOCIAL CASEWORK PRACTICE**

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### **I. The study phase**

In the study phase the client presents the problem. This phase begins with the caseworker involving the client fully in the process. The essential functions of the worker are to facilitate the client to participate and interact in the process.

This stage is crucial because the client makes the important decision of whether to enter into the treatment. Whether to accept or decline a service is the client's decision. The client, not the worker makes the choice. So the initial contact needs to be fruitful and constructive to encourage the client to continue in the service.

#### **Client-Worker Communication**

The worker's attitude is an important controlling factor in what the client decides. At this juncture, the worker is guided by the basic values of social work. Showing respect for the worth and dignity of the client profoundly influence the worker's practice with individuals. Worker believes in the 'worth', value which places the individual in a position of 'eminence', where a client is placed above objects and institutions, worth caring for because he or she is an individual. While communicating this value, the worker reinforces the problem-solving capacity, worth and self-affirmation in the client. Worker also applies his/her skill and knowledge in helping clients to decide, to express individuality and ambivalence in socially approved ways. This helps the client to achieve social enhancement and personal growth.

It is the first task of the worker to hear the client's description of his problem, catching not only the words but also their meaning --- what is said and what is unsaid are important. Mary Richmond described the first interview in the book, 'Social Diagnosis' as an opportunity for a full and patient hearing and for getting an idea of the client's attitude towards life. A sense of leisure, even within the limited time, conveys to the client that the worker regards him as a person of worth to whom the worker wishes to give the time that is needed for full understanding. A rapport is established where in the worker is natural, outgoing, and at ease. Worker takes definite steps to establish the so called emotional bridge over which factual data regarding the client and his/her problem pass to the worker and back, over which interpretations and guidance pass from worker to the client.

Much of this type of communication takes place through nonverbal or para verbal means --- nods, smiles, and an attentive posture. The worker usually tries, by giving the client an empathetic hearing, to lessen anxiety and give the client the feeling that he or she is in a place where help will be given. Remarks such as "You are looking well today" or "I can understand how difficult that must have been" or "Such feelings are natural" are some illustrations.

Two factors are important in this stage --- the client's trust in the worker's competence and his/her trust in the worker's goodwill. The way the client sees the worker depends a great deal on the worker's true interest in helping the client, his/her warmth and his/her acceptance of the client. The worker's way of greeting the client, his/her tone of voice, facial expression, and posture, as well as his/her verbal expression and the actual content of his/her communications will all contribute to how the client feels about the worker. The worker will have to show his/her competence by understanding the client's needs and feelings, by his/ her knowledge of resources and by the skill with which he/ she enables the client to communicate. The emphasis during the interaction is on the 'here and now' and on the problem. The problem may not be as what is seen by the worker but as experienced at the moment by the client. This relationship, which is established between the two, is therefore a central means of help in casework. Perlman describes it as 'an attitude of attentiveness, respect, compassion and steadiness' and adds, "It is this demonstration of sympathetic attitudes and intent that, more than words, encourage the client to begin to tell his/her troubles."

### **Understanding the Client**

Study basically involves three main activities, which will help in understanding the client:

- a)                    Ascertaining the facts;
- b)                    Pondering their meaning; and
- c)                    Deciding upon the means of help.

### ***Ascertaining the Facts***

According to the Oxford Dictionary 'a fact is a thing certainly known to have occurred or to be true, a datum of experience.' Facts may be a present fact or fact of history, it may be tangible or intangible. All these facts are important in casework, often the intangible ones most of all. The next issue that we

need to address ourselves is: What facts do we really need in order to help? Data on the client's feelings and emotions, communicated in the interview are of great relevance and provide important clues regarding the problem. It also helps in understanding the way the client perceives the problem and the way the client has handled the problem in the past. A client cannot be isolated from the family. Study of the family gives a clear insight into the relationship and interactional pattern amongst the family members and more importantly between the client and the family.

There are three aspects on which the worker may focus the study of the client's family:

- 1) The influences in the family, which shaped the early years.
- 2) The way the family relates to the problem and the client.
- 3) The way it reacts to the worker's intervention.

Such data are useful for assessment purposes and for decisions on treatment goals.

The amount of information, which a worker needs in order to help his/her client effectively, varies greatly. In some cases long and detailed exploration may be essential, in others it may be unnecessary. The casework skill here is the ability to determine what each case requires.

To illustrate: For any child care officer, when planning to receive a child into care, particularly if this is likely to be long-term, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of the child's home background and of the kind of life experience he/she has had so far. Worker, therefore, needs to understand what is likely to be relevant in any problem, which falls within a given category.

### Tools and Techniques in the Study Process

Interviews with the client and those significantly involved in the situation can motivate, can teach, can secure information and can help the client to bring out things, which are bothering him/her. It is also one of the best ways of observing a person's behaviour. Records and documents also have a special place. Collateral contacts are also helpful as these are contacts other than the client or his or her immediate family, for example, schools, hospitals, employers and relatives.

### Check Your Progress II

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answers.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) What is client-worker communication? Explain its importance in the study phase.

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2) What are the different kinds of data needed to understand the client and his/her family? Discuss the tools and techniques used in this phase.

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## **Assessment**

Assessment is the understanding of the psychosocial problem brought to the worker by the client. Assessment means to 'know through' or recognising or understanding thoroughly; it attempts to answer the question 'what is the matter'. As Hamilton says 'it is a realistic, thoughtful, frank and "scientific" attempt to understand the client's present need'. Assessment begins with a further elaboration of the problem by the client giving the worker a better perspective and understanding of the problem. As the case progresses and more information are added, the initial impressions are established, changed or even rejected. There is a circular quality about assessment. It never stops during the casework process. As Skidmore and Thackeray say that it is fluid and dynamic as it is ever changing, beginning at study and continuing to termination.

Drawing of tentative inferences begins with the first interview and observation continues throughout the case. All skills rest in knowing what to look for, what to disregard and how to review the findings in the light of the present data. As one moves along with the client to explore, the meaning of the facts becomes clearer. When one asks relevant questions, helps the client to bring out the necessary data, whether he/she is telling about his/her current situation, his/her life experience, or his/her purposes in using the agency, whether he/she arranges with us for a home or collateral visit or for an interview between the worker and another member of the family, one comes to an understanding of the problem and the person who has the problem.

### **Tasks of the Worker**

One of the tasks of the worker in this phase is to arrive at causes and this means a more precise definition and a description of the problem. For example, when the client tells the worker that he is not able to get along well with his wife, we note this as an instance of 'marital discord' which need to be further defined and described. However, as a complete definition of the case is not always possible and final, the assessment needs to be reviewed from time to time.

Another task of the worker is to establish causal relationships. Use of causal knowledge focuses on answering the question, "Why did a given state of affairs come about?" Thus, a caseworker might use such knowledge to understand how and why a particular individual developed as he or she did. For example, the boy runs away from school and does not return home because he is jealous of his younger sibling, or the child's aggressive behaviour was because of his early rejection by his mother. Here we are looking at the interplay between the client and other people and the interactions within them in order to understand how change in one part may affect another part. In other words we are looking at the causes of a specific situation.

We do not seek to know the past because we feel that the past is structured in the present. Failures in adaptation in the past are usually carried over and may be seen in the client's functioning in the present situation even in the interview itself.

The worker is constantly making a review of the strengths and limitations of the client and assessing how the client is coping with the situation. Assessment therefore refers to the analysis of strengths, capacities, limitations, motivation and opportunities of the client. Eventually the net result of assessment guides the worker in planning out the intervention.

### **Role of the Worker**

The role of the worker is essentially that of a knowledgeable person. The worker in a helping role applies his or her knowledge of life situations and understanding of human behaviour. A thorough knowledge of Freud's personality theory may be essential. The functioning of the many aspects of the interacting forces such as id, ego and superego, including how the individual's defences operate is considered of primary importance in assessing the client's capacity to deal with the problem and the



extent to which he/ she is contributing to his/her own problem. Any body of knowledge that focuses on understanding human behaviour, whether in terms of personality or society becomes essential. This is the reason why we study the subjects in our courses --- dynamics of human behaviour and individual and society.

We also need to understand the nature and dynamics of role expectations as they influence the individual's shaping of his/her own behaviour, his/her expectations of how others will act, his/her interpretations of their actions and consequently his/her response to their actions and their response to his/her.

An assessment does not result in categorisation of individuals or in labeling of problems. It further facilitates the worker to use psychosocial classifications say for example, according to socio-economic class, which is often represented by education plus occupation and income or physical disease for which the classification is arrived at by the doctor or breakdowns or inadequacies in social functioning which may be classified into, for instance, parent-child adjustment problem or learning problem. Classifications may be kept flexible keeping in view the dynamic and changing life situation. Questions, comments and in many non-verbal ways, the worker communicates to the client to further elaborate the problem as may be required for intervention. A mutual agreement is maintained between the worker and the client. Goals are set according to the client's needs and the availability of services.

### **Check Your Progress III**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) Define the term assessment. Discuss the tasks of the worker in this phase.

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### **III. Intervention**

Technical definitions of “intervene” as given in Webster’s Dictionary include “to come in or between by way of modification” and “to come between in action”. Intervention knowledge would include that knowledge which helps caseworkers to bring about change in those situations with which they are concerned. This knowledge focuses on the questions, “What can be done to modify this situation”, and “Will it be effective?”.

Intervention begins with the set of goals as decided together by the client and the worker. Goals, as mentioned earlier are determined by the client’s needs and the availability of external resources if the services within the agency are not available. The ultimate objective of the worker is to reduce the client’s distress and decrease the malfunctioning in the client’s situation or to put it positively as Hollis says- it is to enhance the client’s comfort, satisfaction and self- realisation. Here we must look at client motivation and client strengths and at how the situation can be modified or changed.

According to Skidmore and Thackeray, Intervention is guided by a set of principles, which are as follows:

- 1) The client's right to decide his or her own course of action. Worker considers the limits of the client's capacity to make sound choices. This is encouraged and respected by the worker, knowing that one small achievement can be a stepping-stone for further development.
- 2) Acceptance of the client's capacity to change and that he/she can and will utilise his /her resources to improve.
- 3) Social work relates to strengths rather than sickness or disorder. Limitations are handled and recognised realistically.
- 4) Knowledge about the client's family and the various situations related to it are used responsibly for the welfare of the family. The worker shares this information appropriately with the knowledge and consent of the client.
- 5) Worker is responsible not only to the client but to him or herself, the agency, the community and the profession.

### Categories of Intervention

Intervention can be of three types: (a) Direct, (b) Environmental modification, and (c) Administration of a practical service.

- a) By **direct methods of intervention** is meant a series of interviews carried out with a purpose of helping the client make constructive decisions, maintain an emotional balance and reinforce attitudes favourable to growth and change. They are called direct as they involve face-to-face interaction. These include counselling, supportive techniques like acceptance, assurance, and facilitation of expression of feelings, accrediting and building of self-confidence, and being with the client. Counselling techniques are inclusive of the supportive techniques as in the beginning phase of the client worker communication; use of supportive techniques is necessary for a professional relationship. However, as Grace Mathew says they need to be considered as two separate sets of techniques as supportive techniques and not always followed by counselling techniques even though counselling techniques are always preceded by one or more supportive techniques.

Counselling is intended to help a person in a rational way to sort out the issues in his/her situation, to clarify his/her problems and conflicts, to discuss the various options and help make choices. Counselling, to some extent is an educational process and is used only for individual counselling that calls for professional training, education and experience. Some of the important counselling techniques are reflective discussion, giving advice, motivation, clarification, correcting perception, modeling, anticipatory guidance, role playing, reality orientation, partialisation, interpretation, universalisation and confrontation. (For more details of these counselling techniques read the book, "An Introduction to Social Casework" by Grace Mathew.)

Supportive techniques: Acceptance, which is a basic technique of helping, is conveyed through words and the overall behaviour is visible to the client. Further, it is characterised by the way the worker demonstrates warmth and genuineness to the client. The way the client is received and listened to, is important in creating a feeling of being accepted. One way to accept the client is to empathise rather than sympathise. Sympathy is the feeling of concern, compassion or sorrow, while empathy refers to the ability of entering into another person's 'shoes' or mental state and to feel the latter's feelings. Worker has to guard himself or herself from sympathising with a client.

Assurance is a technique used by the worker to help the client understand that his/her feelings are not judged and that the worker is not shocked at hearing the client expressing feelings of hatred, jealousy, resentment and anger. The worker can make statements that are assuring like “I can understand how you feel” or “It is natural to have such feelings in such circumstances”.

Facilitation of expression of feelings is a technique of helping the client to vent his/her feelings. Strong feelings that are bottled up can create blocks in thinking. In such cases it is essential for the worker to help the client to express and the worker acts as a prodder and prompter.

Accrediting and building of self-confidence refers to the worker pointing out to the client his/her strengths and giving him/her due credit for the tasks performed. This helps the client build up his/ her confidence.

Being with the client is a technique that is essential when the client loses confidence or is weighed down with anxiety and is unable to make decision or carry out his/her tasks. In such instances the presence of the worker will serve as a support.

- b) According to Hamilton **environmental modification** refers to all attempts to correct or improve the situation in order to reduce strain and pressure. The emphasis here is on modifying the situation. This method is often referred to as an indirect method of intervention as the focus is on the change of physical environment, or an alteration of any of the social systems, which may be essential for the client for better functioning. For example, the client may be encouraged to join a recreational or other group, so that he/she may be able to function better, or arranging programmes to reduce strain for the slow learners for whom competitive situations are to be avoided.
- c) **Administration of a practical service** as Hamilton says is one of the oldest and best known of the casework methods of intervention. In this method the worker helps the client to choose and to use a social resource or service provided by the agency. Many times, the client knows what he/she wants, but does not know where or how to get it. The client is served in one’s own agency or sent to another agency where he/she is best served. Providing material help, legal aid, medical care and arranging for camps are examples of practical services. The worker needs to have a thorough knowledge of community resources, use them selectively and economically.

**Check Your Progress IV**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answers.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) What do you understand by the term Intervention? Explain its principles.

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2) Briefly explain the categories of Intervention. Give illustrations from your field work setting.

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#### **IV Termination**

Termination as used in social work means the ending of a process that began when the agency agreed to enter into the interventive process. The processes of study, assessment and intervention do not continue forever. The worker and the client together understand and plan out termination.

Termination is also the stage when the client can look back with satisfaction on what has been accomplished. Worker takes the initiative, outlines realistic goals, confirms the importance of what the client can do and is expected to do in resolving the problem. Termination in other words is the signal that the worker uses to confirm that the worker has confidence in the client's ability to learn to cope with situations and to grow. The role of the worker is of an enabler and also as a resource for the client in the present situation.

Termination planning removes certain wrong notions that arise in the client about shifting the responsibility to the agency or to the worker, thus avoiding the feeling of dependency and false hope by some clients. As the relationship gradually comes to a close, the worker reviews the total number of gains made in the interventive process. This review, based on worker's observations and client's contributions will also include a self-assessment by the client. This phase is basically highlighted by the reassurance of the client in his / her readiness and willingness to function more effectively.

#### **V. Evaluation**

Evaluation is the process of attaching a value to the social work practice. It is a method of knowing what the outcomes are.

Evaluation is done for three important purposes, which are:

- 1) To let the agency and the worker know if their efforts have brought fruitful results in the service provided.
- 2) For public relations.
- 3) To build a case for promoting funds.

Casework practices need to be evaluated from time to time. This subject needs to be tested and researched and most importantly needs ongoing validation. There is a need to prove to the public that they are effective and beneficial to the clients. Casework practice should be subjected to critical review. Workers need to be held accountable for what they do and for their social work competence. Workers need to win approval from the public for their programmes. They may sometimes have to be told that their services are overlapping and ineffective. Workers have to enhance their own image and also of the agency to develop public relations. The clients need to give a feedback on the effectiveness of the services.

#### **Recording**

Recording is important as it publicizes the efficiency of the services. Facts have to be gathered, organised and recorded for measurement of results.

### Check Your Progress V

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answers.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) What is the relevance of termination in the casework process? Discuss.

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2) What is the need of evaluation in casework practice? Discuss how evaluation will help in the improvement of the casework practice.

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### 3.5 CASE ILLUSTRATION

#### Study

Suresh was a twelve-year-old boy who had problems of lying, stealing and cheating in examinations. His overall performance in school and particularly in class was far from satisfactory. He also had a behaviour problem, which involved hitting other children, kicking various objects in the classroom, and swearing when other children hit back, or when the teacher corrected him.

Suresh belonged to a middle class family, which consisted of his father, Ramesh, mother Saundarya and one sister Seema, two years younger to him. Ramesh worked as a driver in a private firm and his job seemed demanding. The children rarely saw their father, leave alone talk to him. Saundarya, his mother was sick most of the time, looked weak and lethargic. She could barely manage the home and take care of the children. As a result, the home and the children were badly neglected.

Suresh found it difficult to relate to his mother as she was in bed most of the time. He spent a lot of his time with his friends in the neighbourhood and was hardly seen at home. From his talk and behaviour it could be inferred that he was greatly influenced by his peer group.

#### Assessment

The worker tried to look for the underlying causes of Suresh's behaviour or tried to get at the why's of it. Taking a 'social history' was the purpose of the worker's efforts. What was also important was to look at 'here and now' and on the present problem. Saundarya's ill health, consequently leading to Suresh being neglected were partially some of the causes contributing to the problem. Ramesh's

indifference to the responsibility of taking care and showing love to the children were also the other factors. The teacher in school did not make efforts to provide the right kind of emotional support that he was craving for. He had confidence only in his friends and that was the solace that he looked forward to.

### **Intervention**

First and foremost the worker tried to communicate to Suresh in a warm and non-threatening manner. She demonstrated a genuine concern to his problems in school and towards his mother's ill health. Gradually a rapport was established with Suresh. Worker talked about his friends in school and in the neighbourhood, which made Suresh feel relaxed and free. He started to talk more, gradually expressing some of his likes and dislikes. He expressed dissatisfaction about his father not being around, not taking him out like other fathers did. He said he was unhappy about his mother's illness and that his mother never looked happy. He felt that his little sister was always stuck to his mother – 'never would leave her'.

The meetings with Suresh increased in frequency and the relationship between the worker and Suresh grew stronger. Suresh seemed to enjoy worker's company and would want to spend more time with the worker than before. It was apparent that Suresh had developed a confidence in the worker. Suresh did not hesitate on worker's suggestion to meet his teacher and even his father. Suresh on his own arranged a meeting of the worker with the family.

On meeting the family, the worker realised that it was not an easy task for the worker to relate to Ramesh, the father, on Suresh's problems. It would take at least two to three meetings for Ramesh to change his attitudes towards Suresh. Saundarya, the mother seemed forthcoming and she assured the worker that she would spend more time with Suresh. Worker's meeting with the teacher did not show immediate results. The teacher expressed her inability to help at first as she said she had so many children to look at and so would not have much time to mind Suresh. But then she said she would try.

### **Termination**

Worker planned out a termination once she learned that Suresh was showing improvement. Since Ramesh, Suresh's father needed more counselling, it was necessary for the worker to work more towards changing the father's attitude and outlook. Worker regularly met the mother to pursue the treatment for her illness. Worker used supportive techniques with the teacher in school like for example giving advice, anticipatory guidance, motivating and encouraging.

### **Evaluation**

There was a definite improvement in Suresh's behaviour. His attitude towards other children in class had changed for the better. He was not misbehaving in class. The two to three meetings with Ramesh had made some impact as worker felt that Ramesh was showing some interest in Suresh. The teacher in class enquired and showed concern about Suresh. Complaints about Suresh in the school reduced. Suresh certainly looked better and the worker believed, even felt well.

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## **3.6 LET US SUM UP**

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In this unit, we have studied the various phases of the casework process. The history of social casework process saw the gradual changes and developments in the various approaches of the process. The phases of the casework process, the study, assessment, intervention, termination and evaluation are considered as the threads interwoven throughout the process.

In the study phase the worker makes the initial contact constructively and fruitfully. Showing respect and warmth influence the worker client communication. Worker shows his/her competence by understanding the client's needs and feelings and by his/her knowledge of resources. The tools in this phase include interviews, records and documents and collateral contacts.

Assessment, which is the understanding of the psychosocial problem, is circular in nature. As the case moves on, more information is added or even rejected. Assessment involves arriving at causes, establishing causal relationships and reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the client.

Intervention knowledge focuses on the questions like "What can be done to modify the situation?". This phase begins with a set of goals as decided together by the client and the worker. The ultimate objective is to reduce the client's distress and decrease the malfunctioning of the client's situation. It also includes that knowledge which helps caseworkers to bring forth changes in those situations with which they are concerned. Intervention is guided by a set of principles. Intervention can be of three types: direct intervention, environmental modification and administration of a practical service.

Termination refers to the end of the process. At this juncture, the client looks back with satisfaction on what has been accomplished. It also gives the signal that the worker uses to confirm that the worker has the confidence in the client's ability to cope.

Evaluation is a method of knowing what the outcomes are. Casework practices need to be evaluated from time to time. Caseworkers need to be held accountable for what they do and for their social competence.

Finally facts have to be gathered, organised and recorded for the purpose of measurement of results.

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### 3.7 KEY WORDS

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<b>Application</b>	:	Putting to use. For instance, putting to use the various phases of casework into practice.
<b>Appraisal</b>	:	An estimate or an account of the situation. For instance, the worker needs to be given an assessment of the problem situation.
<b>Dynamic</b>	:	Not static, active, forceful and energetic.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	:	Able to cause some desired results, getting results. For instance, whether the intervention has brought out the desired results.
<b>Etiology</b>	:	Cause of a disease.
<b>Interaction</b>	:	The influence of one on another. For instance, the worker client interaction.
<b>Pathology</b>	:	Study causes and nature of diseases.
<b>Psychosocial</b>	:	Interrelationship of psychological and social factors.
<b>Rapport building</b>	:	A meaningful bond between the client and the worker where the client feels free to talk about his/her problems, gives over something of himself or herself to the worker and begins to take back into himself or herself some of the worker's attitude.

- Roles** : The actions or behaviour expected from an individual.
- Self-affirmation** : Being sure of and being positive about himself or herself.

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### 3.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

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### 3.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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#### Check Your Progress I

- 1) Mary Richmond, the founder of social casework in 1917, in her book *Social Diagnosis* described the three basic phases of the casework process as- a) Investigation or fact finding b) Diagnosis, and c) Treatment. Soon, there emerged differences in the view regarding the phases of the process. Most of the social work writers expressed that the word diagnosis was an inappropriate term as it gave a different meaning altogether. Diagnosis in medicine suggests a completed appraisal before treatment, which may not be possible in casework. Since, in casework both diagnosis and treatment go together, it was felt that the worker manipulated the client, doing something to the client rather than with him/her. Gradually there came changes in the approach on account of certain socio-economic events in the 1920's and 1930's. It redirected its attention to perceive the client in a series of situations. In 1940, Gordon Hamilton tried to bring together the changes that occurred in the method.



Subsequently, the use of the principle of interaction brought with it the dynamic conception of social casework as a process of helping.

- 2) The different phases of casework practice are a) Study, b) Assessment, c) Intervention, d) Termination, and e) Evaluation. Although these steps are performed in a sequence, they may proceed simultaneously. These phases are interwoven as they overlap and may even occur simultaneously. These phases are logically placed, however, they are not performed in sequence. Hamilton emphasized that in the beginning we make a tentative diagnosis and even plan out a treatment. In fact assessment and treatment start in the first phase of the study itself. For instance, we go on arriving at inferences and may continue the phase of study to understand the client better. As long as the assessment continues the phases of study, intervention, termination and evaluation continue to recur.

Nevertheless, these stages, though interwoven, should be clearly stated to prevent the process from losing its focus.

### **Check Your Progress II**

- 1) Worker shows respect to the client. Worker believes that a client is worthy, above objects and institutions. The worker conveys a sense of leisure to regard the client as a person of worth. The client worker communication begins in the first phase itself. A rapport is established between the two. The way the client is received; facial expressions of the worker contribute to how the client feels about the worker. It is the demonstration of attitudes, more than words that encourage the client to tell his/her troubles.
- 2) Tangible and non-tangible data are important to understand the client and his/her family. Data on the client's feelings and emotions are communicated in the interview. There are three aspects on which the worker may focus the study of the client's family. The amount of information, which the worker need, may vary. Sometimes detailed information may be necessary. In others it may be unnecessary. Interviews, records and documents and collateral contacts are important.

### **Check Your Progress III**

- 1) The term assessment means to 'know thorough' or 'recognising or understanding thoroughly'. Assessment involves a circular movement where in, the process continues to operate through out. It is fluid and ever changing. Assessment is important because it gives the worker a better understanding of the problem.

Some of the tasks of the worker are:

- a) To arrive at causes which help in a clearer description of the problem.
- b) To establish a relationship between the causes so that we can understand how one factor affects the other.
- c) To establish a meaningful relationship with the client to know his/her strengths and weaknesses, coping skills, etc.

### **Check Your Progress IV**

- 1) The term Intervention means 'to come in or between by way of modification' and 'to come between in action'. The ultimate objective of the worker is to reduce the client's distress and decrease the malfunctioning in the client's situation. Worker examines the client's situation. Worker also looks into the client's strengths and uses the intervention knowledge to bring forth changes in the client's situation.

The Principles of Intervention are:

- a) The client's right to decide his/her course of action.
- b) Acceptance of the client's capacity to change.
- c) Acceptance of the client's limitations.
- d) Appropriately sharing the information about the client's family with his/her consent.
- e) Worker's sense of responsibility towards the client, the agency, community, profession and to himself/herself.

2) There are three categories of intervention:

- a) Direct method which involves face-to-face interaction help the client make constructive decisions and maintain an emotional balance.

Counselling and supportive techniques are the types of direct method.

Counselling helps in sorting out the issues in the client's situation. Some of the counselling techniques are reflective discussion, giving advice, motivation, modeling and role-playing.

Supportive techniques are acceptance, assurance, and facilitation of expression of feelings, accrediting, building of self-confidence and being with the client.

- b) Environmental modification, which refers to correcting or improving the situation, aims to reduce strain and pressure. It involves modifying the situation which may be essential for the client for better functioning. Like, for example, a client may be asked to join a recreational group or a self-help group for enhancement of his/her social functioning.
- c) Administration of a practical service. In this method the client is helped to choose and use a social resource/service provided by the agency. Providing material help, legal aid, medical care are some examples.

### **Check Your Progress V**

- 1) Termination means ending of a process. It is planned out together by the worker and the client. Termination helps the worker to be sure of the client's ability to cope with the situation and to grow. It is kind of a review done by the worker and the client.
- 2) Evaluation is the conclusion reached based on facts. The three purposes for evaluation are: to let the agency know if their efforts have brought fruitful results, for public relations and to build a case for promoting funds.

Casework practices need to be evaluated from time to time so that the services remain effective and beneficial to the clients. Evaluation will also help the worker to improve their social work competence.

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## UNIT 4 INTERVIEWING IN SOCIAL CASEWORK

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\*Dr.Ranjana Sehgal

### Contents

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Concept and Purpose of Interview
- 4.3 The Relationship of the Interviewer and the Interviewee
- 4.4 Specific Interviewing Problems
- 4.5 Types of Interview
- 4.6 Interviewing Skills
- 4.7 Essential/Requisite Qualities of the Casework Interviewer
- 4.8 Basic Rules of Interviewing
- 4.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.10 Key Words
- 4.11 Suggested Readings
- 4.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 4.0 OBJECTIVES

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The unit aims at providing you with complete understanding of the process of interviewing in social casework. The main objective of this unit is to familiarise you with the basic skills of interviewing in social casework. This unit will acquaint you with the purpose of interviewing and help you to understand how interview can be used as an effective medium of problem solving in social casework.

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- distinguish between interviewing as a general concept and as a specialised and skilled technique in social casework;
- understand the interviewing process and how to interview in social casework;
- enumerate the basic skills of interviewing in social casework;
- outline the essential rules and conditions of interviewing in casework; and
- enlist the qualities required of a casework interviewer.

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

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Interviewing is an art which is practiced in many situations with varying degrees of satisfaction to the interviewer and interviewee. Many people representing many different professions conduct interviews. Some people because of the nature of their work spend a substantial part of their time in interviewing such as lawyers, counselors, doctors, journalists, etc. However, social caseworkers, according to Garret are interviewers par excellence. For social workers, interviewing is a pre-eminently important activity. They spend more time in interviewing than in any other single activity. It is the most important, most consistently and frequently employed social work skill. For

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them interviewing is an art as well as a science and in order to be successful practitioners they have to be adept at this art and understand the science behind it.

Social casework employs a variety of approaches in attempting to help the client. All casework interviewers have to make the interviewee feel at ease, all have to help the interviewee talk about the difficulties, all have to guide the interview so that its purposes are achieved, and all have to start and end the interview in a way which maximises helping. This unit describes the general art of interviewing as adapted and enacted by the social caseworkers.

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## **4.2 CONCEPT AND PURPOSE OF INTERVIEW**

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### **What is an Interview?**

The most obvious feature of an interview is that it involves communication between two individuals. But can all interactions between two people be termed as interview? When two friends are talking to each other is it an interview? When a father and son are conversing with each other is it an interview? No, it is not. You have to distinguish between mere conversation and an interview. Not all the talks that take place between two people can be termed as an interview. Interview is not a mere conversation but a purposeful, directed conversation. One person, i.e., the interviewer takes the responsibility for the development of the conversation. He/she sees to it that the conversation moves towards the desired goal.

The professional interview is different from an informal interview for varied reasons, the predominant feature being that it is conducted within the framework of a specialised knowledge and skill. In a professional interview the interviewer operates within the confines of a well defined setting and is backed by organised experience and recognised competence, working towards known and established purposes.

Interviewing is an integral and important activity in every profession. Both experienced practitioners and relatively inexperienced social workers struggling on the job with all the recurrent problems of interviewing, and seeking some specific guidelines and answers, may benefit from an explicit examination of the interview in this unit.

### **Interview --- A Purposeful Conversation**

The simplest definition of an interview is that it is a conversation with a deliberate purpose, a purpose mutually accepted by the participants. It is usually a face-to-face interaction which involves both verbal and non-verbal communication between people during which ideas, attitudes and feelings are exchanged.

### **Distinguishing Interview from Conversation**

The crucial characteristic which distinguishes an interview from a conversation is that in an interview the interaction is designed to achieve a conscious purpose. If the interaction has no purpose, it may be conversation but it may not be termed as an interview.

The point of differences between an interview and conversation are listed below:

- 1) Since the interview has a definite purpose, its content is chosen to facilitate achievement of the purpose. The orientation of the conversation is associational, and there is no central theme.
- 2) If the purpose is to be achieved, one person has to take responsibility for directing the interaction (designated as interviewer) so that it moves towards the goal. There are no comparable terms to

indicate status, positions and role behaviour in a conversation as its participants have mutual responsibility for its course.

3) In an interview between a professional and a client, one person asks questions and another answers them partly because someone has to take the leadership. Here, two people are working on the problem of one.

4) The actions of the interviewer must be planned, deliberate and consciously selected to further the purpose of interview whereas the behaviour of all the parties to a conversation may be spontaneous and unplanned.

5) An interview requires exclusive attention to the interaction. A conversation, however, can be peripheral to other activities.

6) Because it has a purpose, the interview is usually a formally arranged meeting. A definite time, place and duration are established for the interview.

7) Because an interview has a purpose other than amusement, unpleasant facts and feelings are not avoided. In a conversation, the usual tacit agreement is to avoid the unpleasant.

### **What is a Social Casework Interview?**

The casework interview refers to the meeting of the social worker and the client in a face-to-face conversation. It is not a casual conversation but a professional activity on the part of the social worker, because the conversation is geared to a specific or general purpose which may be for obtaining or imparting information, giving help or studying and assessing the client's situation.

### **Purpose of Social Casework Interview**

Interviewing is the base on which the theory and the practice of social casework has been built over the years. It is the main medium of help without which the social casework process will never be possible.

Interviewing is one of the important casework technique which functions as a conveyor for the transmission of help to the client. The purposes it serves may be one or more of the following:

#### **Obtaining and imparting information**

Interviewing is a two way process. Just as information is received by the social worker, so also information is imparted to the client regarding official procedures and other matters about himself/herself, his/her role as a social worker, and about the function of the agency.

Generally, the client is a perfect stranger to the agency on his/her first visit. He/she may or may not bring a note of referral from a third person indicating the reason for referral. The social worker has to gather data regarding the problem. When a client is not able to furnish the required information, members of his/her family are interviewed for the purpose.

#### **Study and assessment of the client's situation/ problems**

Data gathered from and about the client are sorted out and analysed, from which relevant aspects are linked to form a verbal picture of the problem situation with clear indications of cause-effect relationships. In this process, the social worker applies the knowledge of social sciences for understanding the behaviour of the clients and others in a problem situation. Ordinarily a few interviews are necessary before an assessment of the situation can be made.

### **Interview as a direct tool for giving help**

The information that the social worker elicits and the social assessment that she evolves serves as the blue print based on which she decides suitable mode of help. During the interview many other casework skills and techniques are also used. Casework interview is operative as long as the individual is a client of the agency. The interview is a channel of direct help even at the first contact between the social worker and the client.

#### **Check Your Progress I**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answers.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) Define interviewing. How is it different from conversation?

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2) List the purposes of interviewing in social casework.

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### **4.3 THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE INTERVIEWER AND THE INTERVIEWEE**

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All human beings form relationships with other human beings but the relationship formed by a caseworker with the client is special and unique. This relationship facilitates the whole interviewing process.

For many a client, talking with someone who listens with a non-judgmental understanding instead of criticising or admonishing is a unique experience. This relationship with a person who does not ask anything for himself personally but focuses his/her interest entirely on the client and yet refrains from advice or control is a very satisfying one (Garret).

The establishment of a relationship between the client and the caseworker serves as a prerequisite to a successful interviewing process.

#### **Establishing Rapport**

Establishing rapport, especially in the Indian context becomes easy when the caseworker is well aware of the client's total environment as well as the socio-cultural processes, which influence his/her thinking and behaviour. The worker can also work through the network of family members, close friends, elders, etc. Home visits, talking over a cup of tea, knowing the interests, likes and dislikes of the client facilitate this process. The caseworker's own background, environment and behaviour are of crucial importance in establishing rapport.

Once a positive relationship is in place between the worker and the client, the client is ready to open his/ her heart to the caseworker. Homogeneity of language and socio-culture background further facilitates the process. The caseworker with his/her comments and questions continuously stimulates this process. As the 'more important' is distinguished from the 'less important', crucial issues are center of focus. Supported by the relationship, the client feels free to communicate better with the worker. Even though the problem may still remain unresolved, some significant changes may occur in the attitude of the client towards it. Consequently, his/her feelings of anxiety and frustration may also undergo change and become less intense.

During the interviewing process, the caseworker and the client have to keep in focus the professional nature of their relationship. A professional relationship is pursued for a purpose, which should be recognised by both participants, and it is over once that purpose is achieved.

In casework, the problem of the client is the mutual concern of the client and the caseworker and the caseworker has the requisite knowledge and competence to help the client. The caseworker presents herself in the same warm and receptive ways to all clients during the interview; however the clients may respond and react differently. Some clients may bring forth inappropriate reactions and a caseworker should be skilled in managing the problematic responses.

### **Transference**

The most frequently encountered necessity to "work" a relationship occurs with the phenomena called "transference". To any emotionally charged relationship each of us brings conscious and unconscious feelings and attitudes that originally arose in or still belong to other earlier important relationships. This is readily understandable for none of us comes newborn to new relationships --- we are drawn to or repelled by persons who unconsciously remind us of others. These transferred elements of attraction or repulsion, yearning or defensiveness, liking or dislike occurs spontaneously and they may emerge at any point in a relationship ---at the beginning or any time along the way. In casework they present no particular problem if the client is not so heavily subject to them that he sees and reacts to the caseworker as though he were some person with a function other than that of a professional helper. When the client reacts inappropriately, with excessive or distraught feeling, to what is called forth, we say, that "transference" or a "transference reaction" has taken place. Transference may occur after an interview that has been deeply satisfying and has called up echoes of submerged wishes to be more fully and continuously satisfied then the client suddenly feels a surge of overwhelming gratitude or helpless frustration and reacts "childishly". "Why can't we drop all this professional stuff and just be friends?" pleads the woman who wants the caseworker's affection but not his/her help in working out her problems. Transference may also manifest not in spoken expression at all but rather in the way a client momentarily or consistently reacts towards the caseworker. They may be considered transference reactions when on their examination in the light of the actual role and operations of the caseworker they have not actually been provoked. Transference manifestations need to be recognised, identified and dealt with as they occur, but the effort is to so manage the relationship and the problem solving work so as to give minimum excitation to transference. Primarily the caseworker avoids the rousing of transference or deals with its spontaneous emergence by maintaining his/her clarity of direction, role and purpose (Perlman 1957).

## Counter Transference

The caseworker is also human who has had his/her share of satisfying and frustrating relationships in his/ her personal life. He/she too may have “relationship reactions” and should have the requisite professional skill to manage them. She may at times unconsciously transfer into his/her relationship with the client certain positive and negative reactions or strong feelings of attachment which are not realistically called for. This phenomenon is called counter transference. Any personal and subjective involvement with the client may be a part of counter transference. The caseworker through practice will have to recognise and separate the personal from the professional and consciously control his/her subjective responses. The counter transference may otherwise hamper the smooth process of interviewing and derail the interviewing process.

Transference and counter transference are dynamic factors that operate in casework interview and have to be dealt with maturity and competence.

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## 4.4 SPECIFIC INTERVIEWING PROBLEMS

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During the interview process, the interviewer and the interviewee may at times face a variety of problems or blocks which prevent or impede the interviewing process. The most obvious of these is physical and the most complex is psychological. However, many a time they may appear in combination. For effective interviewing one must be alert to such barriers and take remedial steps. Some of the specific interviewing problems are explained here which could be due to any of the following factors.

- Environmental factors
- Socio-cultural factors
- Psychological factors
- Factors related to the client/caseworker

### Environmental Factors

- **Physical setting and seating arrangement:** The purpose at the beginning of the interview is to establish a setting, mood and pace which will be conducive to a productive conversation. The physical setting and the seating arrangement may sometimes serve as a barrier. If the client is made to sit too far or too close, it may put him ill at ease. The physical setting should be one that leads to comfort and helps him relax. The client and the caseworker should not sit sideways but face-to-face so as to establish eye contact, else, the worker will not be able to note all facial expressions. Seating of chairs should not be such so as to lead to physical inconvenience which could be distracting. Insufficient light and excess temperature can negatively affect the interviewee’s initial response to the interviewer. Any physical barriers to non-verbal communication where the interviewee’s body is non-verbal can make the client inaccessible to conversation.
- **Noise:** The place of interview should be free of any disturbance or distraction. Noise can be a source of distraction for both the client and the interviewer and it should be minimal. During casework interviewing, the environment should be noise free, so that nothing is unheard.

For example: If the interview is disturbed by loud traffic noise, the worker may have to ask the client to repeat which may lead to irritability and loss of vital information.



- ***Lack of privacy and frequent interruptions:*** Lack of privacy is a common barrier especially in an Indian setting. More than often the whole family wants to be a part and parcel of the interviewing process. Though privacy is desirable, in certain cases, if the interviewer and interviewee belong to the opposite sex, family may not permit them to meet in isolation. Frequent telephone calls, walking in and out of the room can fail to create an atmosphere wherein the clients feel free to reveal their innermost thoughts and feelings. Further during home visits, one may fail to get total privacy.

### **Socio-cultural Factors**

- ***Biases:*** Keeping one's biases from intruding into the interview is a major task at times. Many a times it is difficult to keep one's personal likes and dislikes, preferences and predispositions from affecting the interaction. Biases and prejudices lead to stereotype thinking and categorisation of interviewee in terms of predetermined presumptions.
- ***Socio-cultural differences:*** Class, colour, age, customs, beliefs and sexual preference are some of the important socio-cultural differences that at times separate the interviewer from the interviewee. We generally have the tendency to stereotype a person by his/her age, race, class or ethnicity. These factors tend to intrude at times into the interviewer-interviewee relationship despite the worker's vigilance.

Knowledge of the client's cultural milieu is necessary in understanding the client as well as in solving his/her problem. The interviewing process will be totally hampered if the interviewer fails to vary the communication patterns to accommodate differences in age, race, culture and class.

- ***Complexes that affect people due to religious affiliations:*** Problems may be encountered when dealing with specific concerns which are impacted by religious differences. Example-- a Muslim caseworker may be uncomfortable discussing gender discrimination with a Hindu female client.
- ***Class and status differences:*** Problems may crop up if the interviewer is from a lower class and goes to interview people who have high status. The high status person is faced with the problem of maintaining appropriate distance without becoming unapproachable. The lower status interviewer has the problem of assuring the interviewee of her expertise and knowledge in her own area. In the Indian context a higher caste client may find it difficult to talk freely with the low caste worker.

### **Psychological Factors**

- ***Differences of age, intelligence and attitudes:*** If the interview content is not according to the age of the client then distortion is likely to occur in their interaction. Aspects like age differences may at times operate as barrier to effective interviewing especially if the client is too young or much older to the interviewer. A generation gap is inevitable. The interviewer may have special problems with her own feelings when working with interviewees from different age groups.

The interaction should be channelised according to the client's level of intelligence. The interviewer must keep a check on client's attitude. The interview must always be adapted to the client, emotionally and intellectually. Always the interview must start where the client is and move ahead as fast as the client can move.

- **Personal inadequacies and personality complexes:** The interviewer as a human may have personality complexes or his/her own personal inadequacies. He may be introvert or of shy nature. One's personal complexes and limitations could also act as a barrier at times.

#### **Factors Related to Client and the Caseworker**

- **Lying and fabrication:** Lying and fabrications by the interviewee present a difficult problem for the social work interviewer. A relationship built on lies and maintained through lies (one lie leading to others) involves a complex mixture of feelings, none of which can lead to easy communication. Clients lie because they want to be accorded respect and acceptance; they want to present a socially desirable façade, hiding the imperfections. If you suspect lying, ask yourself what prompts this behaviour--- what purpose does it serve?

Our effort should be to act in a manner which would deny the client, all reason for lying.

- **Boredom and frustration:** Repeated casework interviews with the same general problem increase boredom and it becomes hard to maintain the same level of interest. The caseworker may become bored and somewhat calloused, having listened repeatedly to a long series of difficult sessions with many similar elements.
- **Hiding back vital information:** Clients hide back vital information because they have the feeling of insecurity and they want to be accorded respect and acceptance. The interviewer should assure the client of confidentiality and a persistent and genuine effort for the betterment.
- **Non-cooperative client:** At the outset of the casework interaction, clients show no interest towards sharing their problem and try to avoid the interaction by maintaining a long spell of silence. Many a times the clients may refuse to cooperate, hampering the interviewing process.
- **Misunderstanding the message:** The language used during interview should be simple and understandable to the client so that client may not get misled during the interview interaction.
- Transference reaction on the part of the client can also obstruct the smooth flow of the interviews

#### **Factors Related to Case-worker**

- Inability to vary the pattern of interviewing to accommodate the differences in race, class, culture
- Exploiting position and power to dominate interviewee
- Selective attention and listening
- Stereotyped thinking and categorisation of client on the basis of preconceived assumptions
- Overemphasizing personal need gratification and rewards
- Priority to own needs over the needs of the client
- Professional failure, self-control in case of the client's hostility, rejection and abusive behaviour
- Coming unprepared for the interview

- Bureaucratic approach with more inclination towards procedural details and strict interpretation of rules. Task-oriented approach rather than person-oriented approach
- Too active or too passive
- Counter-transference reactions

This is by no means an exhaustive list. Success in the interview would depend on the joint efforts of the client and the caseworker to overcome these problems.

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## 4.5 TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

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The various types of interview patterns are discussed as below:

On the basis of the manner in which they are conducted, interviews are generally of the following types:

### 1) Structured Interview

It is also known as controlled, guided or directive interview. Under this, a predetermined questionnaire is used. The interviewer is asked to get the answers to those questions only. He/she generally does not add anything from his own side. The language too is not changed. He/she can only interpret the statement wherever necessary.

### 2) Unstructured Interview

It is also known as uncontrolled or non-directive interview. No direct or predetermined questions are used in this type of interview. The interviewers may develop questions as the interview proceeds. It is generally held in the form of free discussions. The basic objective of this method is to get the client express himself/herself freely.

### 3) Mixed or Depth Interview

It is a combination of structured and unstructured types of interviews. Under this method the client is free to express himself/herself but at the same time structured questions provide a base of information to the interviewers to compare the clients.

The method of conducting an interview will be influential to a considerable extent by the purpose of the interview. On the basis of the purposes they serve, interviews are of following types, some are primarily directed towards obtaining information, some primarily towards giving help. Most, however involve a combination of the two.

#### 1) Information gathering or social study interview

Its purpose is to obtain a focused account of the individual in terms of social functioning. The information enables the worker to understand the client in relation to the social problem situation. Knowledge about the client and his situation is a necessary prerequisite to an understanding of the client in his situation. And understanding is a necessary prerequisite for effectively intervening to bring about change.

#### 2) Diagnostic / Decision-making Interviews

This type of interview is geared towards the appraisal and determination of :

- What the problem or the trouble is?

- What factors seem to be contributing to it?
- What can be changed and modified?

As the caseworker listens to each interview he/she constantly tries to answer the above three questions and what he/she does in the immediate interview will be, to a large extent, dependant on this understanding. For example, in the case of a delinquent juvenile, the caseworker has to direct the interview in answering the following question:

- How the client sees himself/herself as a delinquent?
- What role his/her parents, peers, neighbourhood have played in contributing to the problem?
- The teacher’s attitude, school curriculum and environment.
- Other contributing factors such as current provocations, historical factors, personality makeup, etc.
- The anxiety, anger and other such feelings experienced by the clients.
- What needs to be changed in the client and/or his/her environment?

Diagnostic interview is multifaceted and is an orderly attempt to understand the client-situation configuration.

### 3) Therapeutic Interview

The purpose of this interview is to effect change in the client, in his/her social situation, or in both. The goal is more effective social functioning on the part of the client as a consequence of the therapeutic changes. Such interviews involve the use of special remedial measure to effect changes in the feelings, attitudes and behaviour on the part of the client in response to the social situation.

#### Check Your Progress II

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) What are the various types of interviews?

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## 4.6 INTERVIEWING SKILLS

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The interviewing process comprises a series of interviews which deal with the basic steps in the problem-solving process---Study, Diagnosis and Treatment.

These three phases of social work are nothing but the process of data collection, data assessment and intervention pertaining to the client in his problem-solving process. The interviewing process in social casework, thus, follows a consciously dynamic movement through these various stages to

accomplish the purpose of casework. Each single interview is only a part of the sequence of the whole process. We can divide the whole interviewing process into three important/basic phases which we can term as:

- Initial/Introductory phase
- Developmental phase
- Final/Concluding phase

Though in actual practice, it may not be possible to keep the phases in watertight compartments, but for our conceptual understanding we need to demarcate and separate the various steps in the process and dwell on each one of them separately. Thus, the interviewing process is viewed here as a unit of series of steps embodying a process of three successive phases. As these phases have already been discussed in detail in the previous unit only the generic skills and the specific skills relevant to each phase will be analysed in this unit.

Interviewing in social casework is not a routine procedure of asking certain set questions and recording their answers. It is an art, a skilled technique which the social caseworker can improve and gradually perfect through practice. The requisite skills however have to be tempered with adequate scientific knowledge. Knowledge of the theory underlying interviewing gives you the required framework within which one can critically examine the skills used and the ways to improve.

In this section you will be acquainted with the skills which a casework interviewer has to acquire to become an effective interviewer. We will be discussing them at two levels:

- Phase-specific skills
- Generic interactional skills

Caseworkers are constantly struggling to hear, see, feel and understand what the others are trying to express or hide and are well aware of the complexities of this task.

### **Phase Specific Skills**

#### **The Introductory Phase**

While every phase of the interview contributes significantly to the whole process the initial phase is of particular importance for it has a special purpose which is to establish the setting, mood and pace most conducive to a productive conversation between the client and the caseworker so that the interview can get off to a good start. The following skills are most useful in the Introductory/Initial phase.

#### **1) Preparatory Reviewing**

Preparatory reviewing is a skill used to examine and consider information available to you and your agency prior to an initial contact with another person. For example, if a prospective client has received service at the agency before, you would look over relevant records the agency has on file. Preparatory reviewing helps you grasp significant factual information which reduces the possibility that the applicant, client or other persons will have to repeat information they have previously provided.

#### **2) Preparatory Arranging**

The skill of preparatory arranging is the logistic preparation for a first meeting. It includes scheduling an appointment for the interview, ensuring that there is adequate time and privacy, and organising the physical environment. It may include securing an interview room, locating an interpreter, or rearranging furniture. It includes considering the appropriateness of the interviewer's appearance and perhaps even hygiene. In agency settings, it includes considering the potential effects of the physical environment. To sum up, preparatory arranging should facilitate communication and diminish, to the extent possible, interference and distraction.

### **3) Preliminary Planning**

The interviewer should engage in the skill of preliminary planning before the interviews with the clients. Many first meetings have as their primary purpose, gathering of information. In such cases you might formulate a general but flexible plan concerning what data to seek and from whom. Preliminary planning enables you to begin the interview in a coherent fashion and helps you formulate a tentative purpose to share with the client.

### **4) Introducing Yourself**

At the beginning, you should identify yourself by name and profession and by agency or departmental affiliation. You might also want to provide formal identification. In most circumstances, a friendly facial expression and a warm, firm handshake or a 'namaste' are helpful in making contact. A few informal comments may also help the clients feel more at ease with you, but do not overdo it.

### **5) Seeking Introduction**

Early in a first meeting, the interviewer should encourage each new client to say his or her name, and then pronounce it correctly. After knowing the client's name ask how the person prefers to be addressed and thereafter throughout the interview, refer to your client by name.

### **6) Clarifying Purpose**

The initial phase of the interview should clarify the purpose that will engage the participants during the course of interview. The purpose needs to be of manageable proportions. Frequently the stated purpose of an interview is either far too ambitious or too ambiguously stated. Both participants should make every effort to formulate the purpose in operational terms.

### **7) Probing/Questioning**

When the interviewer and client substantially agree about the purpose of the meeting, one may then proceed to seek information about the concerns that led to this encounter. 'Probes' are used to elicit facts, ideas and feelings concerning the person, the problem, the situation and potential means for resolving the identified difficulties. The process of probing yields information necessary for mutual understanding, assessments, contract formulation, movement towards problems resolution and goal attainment, evaluation and ending. Generally, probes are phrased as questions. A good general rule regarding questioning is that it should be for the twin purposes of ---

- a) Obtaining specific information
- b) Directing the conversation from irrelevant to relevant areas so as to make the interview more fruitful and meaningful.

Questions are generally of two types:

**1. Close ended questions:** They are asked to elicit short responses usually a 'yes' or 'no' or one line answers. Example: "Do you like going to the movies?" "Who is your best friend?" Such questions are especially useful in crisis situations where vital information must be gathered quickly. However, too many such questions should not be asked in a casework interview, else the client may feel he is under some investigation and is being interrogated than being interviewed. Some closed-ended questions are known as 'leading questions' in legal terms. A leading question is phrased in such a way as to encourage a specific answer---one that the questioner wishes to hear. Example: "Did your parents not have a fight on the night you ran away from home?" Such leading questions should generally be avoided.

**2. Open ended question:** Such questions are phrased in a manner that encourages people to express themselves more extensively. They are designed to further exploration on a deeper level or in a broader way. Most of the time, they tend to check a factual answer. These are 'what' and 'how' questions that enables the client to react and respond in a number of ways. Example: 'What happened after that?' "How did you feel at that moment?"

## **8) Reflecting Feelings**

In order to use competently the skill of reflecting feelings, the interviewer needs a sophisticated vocabulary of feeling words without which it is extremely difficult to paraphrase the feelings, emotions and sensations experienced and expressed by clients. Example: Under the 'happiness' category you might include the word 'satisfied', under the 'anxiety and fear' category, you might list 'stress' as an associated term. Thus 'reflecting feelings' mirrors client's emotions and the facts or thoughts associated with them.

## **The Developmental Phase**

### **1) Organising Descriptive Information**

It is the first step for assessment process to organise the information gained through exploration into a form that allows for efficient retrieval and examination. Typically, this involves arranging data according to certain categories that the interviewer and the agency professionals consider to be significant. Descriptive organisation allows you to present coherently information that you read, directly observe or hear.

### **2) Analysing**

Analysing entails examining in detail the various pieces of information about the client in his/her problem situation. The attempt here is to pinpoint the critical elements or themes from among this information. Finding out truth with probing at a right point is a skill which may be developed with experience and sensitivity.

### **3) Synthesis**

Synthesis builds on what is gained from analysis. It involves assembling significant pieces of information into a coherent whole by relating them to one another and to elements of your theory, knowledge and experience base.

### **4) Reflecting a Problem**

The interviewer demonstrates to the client that he/ she understands his/her view of an identified problem. Clients, especially adults who voluntarily seek social services are usually quite ready to share their views about the problems of concern, but some clients may need support guidance and encouragement to do so. Reflecting a problem is an important form of active emphatic listening.

### **5) Developing an Approach**

In developing an approach, the interviewer and the client must identify who will meet with them in what context or what will be the target of change. Together they must also determine who will be involved in the change efforts and how these efforts might affect others. Both of the participants consider a number of factors and develop a scheme or problem to guide their work together.

#### **6) Attending Behaviours and Minimal Encouragements**

Attending behaviours are those observable actions of the interviewer, which indicates that he/she is interested and paying attention. An important component of attending behaviour is non-verbal, manifested in eye contact and body posture.

Minimal encouragements are short utterances with little content which have the effect of encouraging the interviewee and reinforcing his desire to continue– “uh- huh,” “go on” , “so”, “I see”, “ sure” – they include non-verbal nodding.

#### **7) Summarising or Recapitulation**

Partial or detailed summaries and recapitulations help to extend the range of communication. The interviewer briefly reviews what has been discussed and gives the interview its direction. A summary tends to pull together a section of the interview, make explicit what has not been covered. Summarising requires a sifting out of less relevant, less significant material. It also indicates to the interviewee that the interviewer has been listening attentively and knows what has been going on.

#### **8) Making Transitions**

At times during the interview, the interviewer may decide that a change should be made in the material being discussed. The content under discussion may have been exhausted. Transitions help extend the range of interview without disturbing the relationship.

#### **9) Paraphrasing**

Paraphrasing is a selective restatement of the main ideas in the phrasing, which resembles, but is not the same as, that used by the client. ‘Para’ means ‘alongside’, and a paraphrase parallels what the client said. A paraphrase helps the interviewer check his/ her understanding of what the client is saying. It also helps the interviewee to see more clearly what he/she has said, since it holds a mirror up to his/her communication.

#### **10) Interpreting**

An important task that confronts the caseworker is to interpret what has been said and heard. The interpretation that worker gives to words and body language will be a function of theoretical grounding/ orientation. The interviewer must discover factors by going beneath the surface of his/her client’s remarks and understand them more than is superficially significant. For example, the casework interviewer must look for the underlying anxiety and fear that may be symptomatically indicated by hostility and dependency.

#### **11) Advising**

Making a suggestion or recommendation can be a perfectly appropriate action by a caseworker. In using the skills of advising, the interviewer must always convey that the client may freely accept or reject his/ her advice. In general, resist the temptations to offer advice based on your own personal feelings, attitudes and preferences. Of course, there are many occasions when you clearly should offer direct and specific advice but avoid communicating advice as commands or directives.

#### **12) Confronting**



In confronting, the interviewer points out to the clients directly and without disapproval–inconsistencies, or contradictions in their words, feelings and actions. Confrontation can have a powerful effect on clients. It has the potential to cause severe disequilibrium in people who are highly stressed or have fragile coping skills. Therefore, be certain that the person has the psychological and social resources to endure the impact. Avoid judgmental or evaluative speculation or conclusions. Finally, it is wise to “precede and follow confrontations with empathic” responses.

### **13) Reframing**

Reframing refers to the words you say and the actions you take when introducing clients to a new way of looking at some aspect of themselves, the problem or the situation. Usually, it involves sharing a different perspective from those which clients have previously adopted. Reframing is applicable when the fixed attitude constitutes a fundamental part of the problem for work. It liberates the clients from a dogmatic perspective. As a result, clients may reconsider strongly held beliefs which in turn affect their feelings and behaviour as well.

### **The Final / Concluding Phase**

#### **1) Reviewing the Process**

It is the skill of tracing what has occurred between the interviewer and the client over the time they have worked together. It is a cooperative process where both share in the retrospection. You might probe for additional thoughts and feelings and then share some of your own significant recollections.

#### **2) Evaluating**

In addition to reviewing the process, you also engage the client in a final evaluation of progress towards problem resolution and goal attainment. For this discussion, the interviewer may draw on the results of measurement instruments such as before-and-after test scores, graphs and various ratings. You may also share your own subjective impressions of progress. Whatever you do in the form of a final evaluation, be sure to seek feedback from the client about it. As a part of the process, you express your pleasure concerning the positive changes that have occurred.

#### **3) Sharing ending Feelings and Saying Goodbye**

Both the client and the caseworker may experience a wide range of emotions and feelings when the time comes to say a final goodbye. The caseworker should in the last interview give ample opportunity to the client to express his/her feelings related to the ending of the relationship. The intensity of the feelings may vary according to the personality of the client, the duration and intensity of the relationship, the role and the function of the caseworker and the final outcome. The client may be encouraged to share some of his/her feelings (sadness, anger, fear, dependency, gratitude, affection) in the last meeting or else the feelings may lie suppressed forever.

#### **4) Recording and Note-taking**

Following your final meeting with a client, you condense what occurred into a written closing summary. Include in the final recording the following information:

- Date of final contact.
- The names of the interviewer and the interviewee. Beginning date of service.
- The reason why contact between you and the client was initiated.

- The approach taken, the nature of the services provided, the activities you and the client undertook.
- A summary evaluation of progress and an identification of problems and goal that remain unresolved and unaccomplished.
- A brief assessment of the person-problem situation as it now exists.
- The reason for closing the case.

## **Generic Interactional Skills**

### **Talking (Voice, Speech and Language)**

Talking as a skill implies using voice, speech, language and body language effectively so that interviewing can be a smooth affair. The words you choose, the quality of your pronunciation, the sound and pitch of your voice, and the rate and delivery of your speech communicate a great deal to the clients and others with whom you interact. A caseworker has to be very careful with the selection of the words and should use words and phrases that are readily understood by most people. Try to use words that are descriptive and observational rather than inferential. Through your voice, speech and language convey that you are truly interested in what the client has to say. When you speak or write, active voice is preferable to passive voice and each unit of speech should not be so long or complex as to impede understanding.

A caseworker should try to cultivate a talking style which is moderate in vocal tone, volume and speed of delivery. It should be, however, varied to match the pace of the client.

### **Listening**

#### **1) *Hearing and Observing***

‘Hearing’ refers to the process of listening that involves attending to the voice, speech and language of other people. Effective hearing involves removing the barriers and focusing completely on the words and sounds of the client. One should not hear selectively which happens due to judging, comparing, criticising or evaluating what is being said by the other person.

‘Observing’ refers to listening through your eyes. It occurs when you pay attention to the client’s physical characteristics, gestures and other non-verbal behaviour. The purpose of observing is to understand the ways in which the client views and experiences his words. There is hardly any situation in casework where hearing and observing do not go hand in hand.

Among the specific aspects to observe are:

- facial expressions, eye contact
- body language, position and movement

Observation makes it possible to record the behaviour of the client as it occurs. You should not only listen to what the client says but also note closely what he does not say, the vital blanks left in his/her story. Non-verbal signals may supplement or contradict what the client is saying. As you master the art of interviewing it will become apparent to you that people do not always say what they mean or act as they feel.

#### **2) *Encouraging and Remembering***

‘Encouraging’ is an element of listening that very closely approaches talking. You can encourage other people to continue expressing themselves by making very brief responses in the form of single words, short phrases or sounds and gestures. Example: “Please go on”, “Uh-huh”, “Please continue”.

‘Remembering’ is the final dimension of listening. It is the process of temporarily storing information in order that it may later be used, for example, to communicate understanding, make thematic connections between messages expressed at different times, prepare a written record, or develop an assessment.

### **Body Language (Non-Verbal Communication)**

Though we may not be aware of it, for most of us, our body language speaks more than our verbal speech. A lot of communication is non-verbal and our body is the main channel of this form of communication. Factors such as posture, facial expression, eye contact and body positioning are powerful forms of communication. The body language should be congruent with your verbal language. You cannot say ‘thank you’ but actually look ‘sorry’. You can convey through your smile that you are friendly, caring and attentive to the client. It should communicate attention and interest in other person, as well as care, concern, respect and authenticity. You should typically adopt an open or accessible body position when beginning interviews. Tightly clasped hands, looking at a watch tend to communicate nervousness or impatience and slouching in chair may suggest fatigue or disinterest. The frequency and intensity of eye contact should depend on the purpose of interview.

### **Active Listening**

According to Barry Cournoyer, active listening combines the talking and listening skills in such a way that clients feel understood and encouraged towards further self-expression. It represents a clear and tangible demonstration that you have understood, or at least are trying to understand what the client has expressed. It indicates that you want to comprehend fully and accurately what the client has expressed and that you are interested in the client’s views, feelings and experiences. It constitutes a major element of the vital feedback loop between you and your client. Your sincere attempt to understand by active listening almost always elicits further expression from the client. Because it conveys empathy and understanding, there is simply no substitute for active listening. If you only talk or only listen but do not actively listen, you will probably discourage clients from free and full expression.

### **Check Your Progress III**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answers.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) List the skills specific to different phases of the interviewing process.

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2) Outline the generic interactional skills.

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#### 4.7 ESSENTIAL/REQUISITE QUALITIES OF THE CASEWORK INTERVIEWER

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A discussion on skills would be incomplete if we do not touch upon the qualities required on the part of the caseworker to be an effective practitioner. However, the task to list all the qualities is a complex one as definite conclusions may never be reached. Further the qualities may also vary according to the purpose of the interview. For example : The warm accepting qualities necessary for an interviewer whose main objective is therapeutic, may not be required for an interview where primary purpose is assessment. However, the demonstration of these qualities alone will not enable the caseworker to reach the goals unless they are accompanied by specialised knowledge and skills. According to Cournoyer, the following qualities are desirable on the part of an effective worker:

- 1) Empathy
- 2) Respect
- 3) Authenticity
- 4) Self-understanding
- 5) Self-control
- 6) Understanding of social work values and ethics
- 7) Professional social work knowledge
- 8) Responsible assertiveness.

**“Empathy”** is a process of feeling with another person rather than feeling for or feeling towards as in sympathy. Baker (1991) defines empathy as “The act of perceiving, understanding, experiencing and responding to the emotional state and ideas of another person”. Empathy helps the caseworker to gain an appreciation for and sensitivity to the client and helps in developing a rapport and maintaining sound working relationships.

**“Respect”** according to Rogers (1957), is the demonstration of unconditional positive regard. The caseworker should maintain a respect for all clients irrespective of their class, caste and economic status. The caseworker should also recognise and respect the fundamental right of the client to make his own decisions.

**Authenticity:** Hamund, Hapuer and Smith (1977) state that, “Authenticity refers to a sharing of self by behaving in a natural, sincere, spontaneous, real, open and non defensive manner. An authentic person relates to others personally, so that expressions do not seem rehearsed or contrived. However, it does not give an absolute liberty to the caseworker to say or do whatever he/she thinks/feels at any given moment.

**Self-understanding:** It is a quality which a caseworker must possess if he/she is to use himself/herself effectively in helping others. The caseworker has to go through the process of “self exploration and self discovery” in order to “know thyself”.

**Self-control:** Self-discipline and Self-control have to follow self-understanding. Situation may be painful, upsetting, disturbing or provocative wherein the caseworker may be overwhelmed by his/her own emotions and feelings. But an enormous self-control has to be exercised. The worker has to direct her words and action in such a manner that they do not go against the values and ethics of the profession.

**Understanding of Social Work Values and Ethic:** The caseworker must pay consistent attention to professional ethics and obligations as they are applicable to almost all aspects of one’s professional life. For this, he/she must have a thorough grasp of social work values and ethics as well as their legal obligations.

**Professional Knowledge:** A caseworker without professional knowledge is like a painter without a brush. Knowledge related to theory and research of human behaviour, social problems, use of social work theory and principles, etc., and other wide range of areas are essential in order to be effective. The caseworker must keep himself/herself abreast with the latest development of the field to be updated and informed.

**Responsible Assertiveness:** It includes the capacity to express knowledge, opinions, and feelings in a manner that respects both your own and others rights and preferences as unique and valuable human beings. It includes the ability and the manner in which you express your knowledge and opinions, your authority and responsibility, your personal and professional power without showing disrespect to your own dignity and that of the client.

**Check Your Progress IV**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) What are the essential qualities of a caseworker interviewer?

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## 4.8 BASIC RULES OF INTERVIEWING

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One wishes that there was a blueprint of an ‘ideal’ or ‘perfect’ interview available to the caseworker which could serve as ready reference before embarking on the interviewing process. It is impossible to have a comprehensive list of ‘infallible rules’ for conducting a casework interview. However an attempt has been made here to list the rules of interviewing which, if followed/kept in mind by the caseworker will ensure a smooth flow of interaction between the client and the caseworker.

- Effective interviewing is possible only when it is grounded in a basic understanding of human nature, behaviour and motivation.

- The setting of interview is of vital significance. It should ensure some degree of privacy, provide for an atmosphere which is relaxed and physically comfortable, should be free of distracting noise and interruptions. Provide a setting with which the interview can get off to a good start.
- The length of the interview should be determined according to the purpose of the interview. It should be neither too long nor too short.

The client should be put at ease, stimulated to talk freely about his/her problems, helped to organise his/her own confused thoughts and feelings about his/her difficulties. Unless the caseworker herself is relaxed, it is not possible for her to help the client to relax.

- The relationship between the interviewer and interviewee is of utmost importance in casework. The interviewer must never forget the impact that her own personality, appearance and manner may be having on the client.
- Talk in a language understood by the client, begin where the client is and proceed at the pace of the client. The interview must always be adapted to the emotional and intellectual needs of the client.
- Be a warm, receptive and patient listener. Competent listening on the part of the caseworker requires minimal attention to one's own thoughts and feeling and maximum concentration on what the client is experiencing and expressing. A good interviewer is always a good listener and a keen observer.
- Listen to silence for it can be more evocative than words. You should know how to respond and manage pauses and silence. Do not be in a hurry to fill the gap created by silence because an unwarranted or hasty intervention may leave a vital part of the story forever unsaid. A decent respect be shown to silence.
- Master the fine art of questioning. The type of question asked should be in accordance with the purpose of interview. The wording is important but equally important is the tone of voice in which they are put. Framed in simple words, the questions should be neither very few nor too many. A reassuring tone is better than an accusing and suspicious one.
- To understand what is said, understand what is not said, non-verbal behaviour cannot be ignored. Often it can be a more effective message conveyer than the spoken words.
- People do not always say what they mean or act as they feel. Look for 'bodily tensions' because these non-verbal signals may supplement or contradict what the client is saying and thereby help you to read between the lines.
- Have a high level of awareness of your own feelings and emotions, biases and prejudices should be kept outside the purview of the interview as they have no place in a professional interview.
- The interviewing in casework should be a reciprocal process. The intended meaning of the communication should be received and understood by both parties. The client should be included as an active participant in the interviewing process.
- Acknowledge the client's right to self-determination. Direct your activities in the interviewing process towards promoting self-determination and participation.

### Check Your Progress V

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) Describe any four rules of interviewing in casework.

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## 4.9 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit, we have studied the process of interviewing and its relevance in social casework. Interviewing is the most important, frequently employed social work skill. It is a purposeful conversation between the caseworker and the client – an interaction designed to achieve a conscious purpose. We have studied various types of interviews on the basis of the manner in which they are conducted and on the purposes they serve. In ‘information-gathering’ interviews, you encourage people to discuss their views and feelings about themselves, their preferences and strengths, goals and problems and the situation (you gather data that may help you and your client reach a better understanding of the circumstances). In ‘information-giving’ interviews, you share needful or useful knowledge. In ‘assessment-forming’ interviews, your overall purpose is to arrive at an assessment, diagnosis, evaluation or conclusion, often which is followed by the preparation of a recommendation. In ‘change-making’ interviews you effect or help to effect movement or change somewhere within a targeted system.

The process of interview begins with the introductory phase that involves getting acquainted and initiating the interview process. The next step involves a sequence of actions guided towards the desired goal. It includes attending minimal encouragement, paraphrasing, reflecting, summarising, transitions, etc. One of the principal difficulties encountered during this main body of the interview is to stimulate the interviewee to discuss freely all the relevant aspects of the problem for which he wants service. In appraising what needs to be covered, the interviewer again needs an expert knowledge of the particular social problem involved. When the purpose is accomplished, the adhoc social system of interviews is dissolved. Having conducted and completed the interview, the interviewer is faced with the responsibility of recording it. As a consequence of recording, the interviewer has to selectively decide which aspects of the interview were most significant. Throughout the interview, the competent interviewer uses some procedures and skills for helping the client to achieve the objectives of the interview. An interviewer must never forget the impact his own personality and appearance may be having on the client, even in small ways and quite possibly in ways in which the interviewer cannot possibly foresee.

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## 4.10 KEY WORDS

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<b>Attending behaviours</b>	:	Those observable actions of the interviewer which indicate that she is interested and paying attention.
<b>Empathising</b>	:	Empathising involves the imaginative viewing of the situation as the client sees it and understand his feelings and transferring to oneself these particular feelings.
<b>Interpretation</b>	:	Explanation of the client's behaviour in terms of its meaning.
<b>Evaluation</b>	:	The activity of ascertaining whether casework service has achieved the desired result in a case.
<b>Skills</b>	:	Ability to use one's knowledge effectively in doing something. Skill refers to the social worker's capacity to use a method in order to further a process directed towards the accomplishment of a social work purpose as that purpose finds expression in a specific programme or service.
<b>Therapeutic</b>	:	Having treatment and healing elements.

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#### 4.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Cournoyer Barry (1996), *The Social Work Skills Workbook* (2nd ed.), California, Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Garret Annette, *Interviewing: Its Principles and Methods* (3rd ed., New York, Family Service Association of India.

Kadushin, A. (1990), *The Social Work Interview* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), New York, Columbia University Press.

Matthew, Grace (1991), *An introduction to Social Casework*, New Delhi.

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#### 4.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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##### Check Your Progress I

- 1) Interviewing is a purposeful conversation, a purpose which is mutually accepted by the participants. It is different from conversation in the fact that it is designed to achieve a deliberate conscious purpose.
- 2) The purposes of interviewing in social casework are:
  - i) Obtaining and imparting information.
  - ii) Study and assessment of the client's situation or problem.
  - iii) Giving help.

##### Check Your Progress II

The interview pattern is classified on the following two basis:

- i) On the basis of the manner in which they are conducted:
  - Structured Interviews



- Unstructured Interviews
  - Mixed or Depth Interviews
- ii) On the basis of the purposes they serve:
- Social Study Interview
  - Diagnostic Interview
  - Therapeutic Interview

### Check Your Progress III

1) The Phase-specific skills of the interviewing process are:

a) **The Initial/Introductory Phase**

- Preparatory Reviewing
- Preparatory Arranging
- Preparatory Planning
- Introducing Yourself
- Seeking Introductions
- Clarifying Purpose
- Probing/Questioning
- Reflecting Feelings

b) **The Developmental Phase**

- Organising Descriptive Information
- Analysing
- Developing an approach
- Attending behaviours
- Paraphrasing
- Summarising
- Making Transitions
- Interpreting
- Confronting
- Advising/Suggesting
- Encouraging
- Reframing

c) **The Final Phase**

- Reviewing the process
- Evaluating
- Sharing ending Feelings and Saying Good-bye
- Recording

2) **The generic interactional skills applicable to all phases are:**

- i) Talking (Verbal Communication)
  - Voice
  - Speech
  - Language
- ii) Listening
  - Hearing and Observing
  - Encouraging and Remembering
- iii) Body Language (Non-verbal Communication)
- iv) Active Listening

**Check Your Progress IV**

- 1) The essential qualities of a casework interviewer are listed as below:
  - a) Empathy
  - b) Respect
  - c) Authenticity
  - d) Self-understanding
  - e) Self-control
  - f) Understanding of social work values and ethics
  - g) Professional social work knowledge
  - h) Responsible Assertiveness

**Check Your Progress V**

- 1) Effective Interviewing is possible only when it is grounded in a basic understanding of human, behaviour and motivation.
  - a) The setting of interview should ensure some degree of privacy, provide for as atmosphere which is relaxed and physically comfortable, should be free of distracting noise and interruptions.
  - b) The length of the interview should be determined according to the purpose of the interview. It should be neither too long nor too short.
  - c) The client should be put at ease, stimulate him to talk freely about his problems, help him to organise his own confused thoughts and feelings about his difficulties.
  - d) Be a warm, receptive and patient listener. A good interviewer is always a good listener and a keen observer.

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## UNIT 5 HOME VISIT AND RECORDING IN SOCIAL CASEWORK

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*\*Dr. Ranjana Sehgal*

### Contents

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Home visit
- 5.3 Case Recording: Concept
- 5.4 Purpose of Recording
- 5.5 Types of Recording
- 5.6 Principles of Recording
- 5.7 Guidelines for Casework Recording
- 5.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.9 Key Words
- 5.10 Suggested Readings
- 5.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 5.0 OBJECTIVES

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This unit aims to further throw light on some areas of interviewing that were not explored in the earlier unit. It will acquaint you with some aspects of social case recording, another integral part of social casework practice.

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the process of home visit;
- Understand the nature of relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee;
- Explain the problems/barriers which can hamper the smooth process of interviewing;
- Define case recording;
- Enumerate the purpose of records and outline the various types of records
- Outline the principles of case recording; and
- Understand how to collect and organise data.

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### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

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The interviewing process, as we have already seen, has its main objective of gathering information and bringing about a happy adjustment between the client and her situation. The interviewer has to employ interventions that help the interviewee to extend the range and depth of the interview. She has to employ and manifest effective communication of attitudes that help to develop positive relationship. The client caseworker relationship has to be fostered and nurtured through the interviewing process. Many problems from inside and outside this relationship can impede the smooth flow of the interviewing process and need to be handled deftly.

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Once the interviewing is over the next step is to record systematically what has transpired between the client and the caseworker. As a caseworker you have the obligation to keep records through all the phases of practice. It is not enough for the caseworker to know what she is doing but reporting well what one has done is of equal importance. Recording is an integral part of social casework practice as it aids in stimulating thinking about the client and helps in developing the skills required for providing effective help. As students you should first develop a logical way of thinking about problems followed by record writing that reflect this orderly way of thinking.

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## 5.2 HOME VISIT

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Home visit is an important tool used by the caseworker for gathering information about client. The home visit is based on two fundamental beliefs that delivering services in the home can- ameliorate existing difficulties and prevent problems from developing.

Three questions that must be kept in mind during the home visit are:

- Who is the client?
- How is the client served?
- What is the role of caseworker?

**Who is the client?** The answer to this question provides information on the client's identity, problems being experienced by him/her. As one begins to visit the families, the complex interactions that exist among family members become clear and difficulties in relationships can be observed by the caseworker. Home visit will help to ascertain that the client may not be a disturbed alone, rather focus may be required on other family members also.

**How is the client served?** Traditionally, home visit was viewed as treatment or intervention for specific problems and was restricted to the predefined needs of clients. Presently a more broad-based approach is envisaged that conceptualises family as a unit, responds to critical needs of all family members with a focus on prevention, building family strengths and normalisation.

**What is the role of caseworker?** For most of the nineteenth century, the caseworker was considered as an expert with more knowledge and experience than the client. Shifts in the home visitor's role resulted from changes in the way the family was viewed. Client is no longer a passive recipient rather an active participant and the family is encouraged to define its own needs, priorities and preferences. The caseworker therefore is a collaborator, a negotiator and an expert in the helping skills.

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## 5.3 CASE RECORDING: CONCEPT

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After the interviewing process is over the caseworker has the obligation to record the interview. The language of interview now has to be translated into the language of the record (file, forms, computer, etc.).

According to Kadushin, recording can be seen as a part of the interview process. Through the act of recording the interview continues in the mind of the interviewer after it is terminated. It is a retrospective living of the encounter. As a consequence, the interviewer has to selectively decide which aspects of the interview were more significant. She has to systematically organise a somewhat chaotic experience.

**What is a Case Record?**

A record literally means 'a formal writing of any fact or proceeding' and when used as a verb means 'to set down in writing or other permanent form'.

Taking cue from this we can define case record as a written account of the casework proceedings.

However, from the above statement one should not conclude that case recording is an easy, routine and simple task, far from it, its a highly skilled and complex task. Recording is an important and integral part of casework procedure and is an output of the activity of the casework. The importance of recording lies both in the process as well as the product.

For, an individual who is planning to become a caseworker, the art of record writing is worth striving to develop and perfect, not only because case recording is an essential part of good casework and is becoming a more important factor with the increasing complexity of social treatment, but also because the case record is fortunately or unfortunately often used as one of the important indexes of the caseworkers ability.

A question often asked is, why do we need to write records? Do they really serve any purpose? The importance of case records can be ascertained when we look at their functions and the varied purposes they serve.

#### **Check Your Progress I**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) What do you understand by casework recording?

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### **5.4 PURPOSE OF RECORDING**

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According to experts, recording in social casework serves the following purposes:

- It aids practice
- It aids administration
- It aids teaching and supervision
- It aids research

#### **As an aid to practice**

The fact that recording has improved the practice of social casework is now well accepted and is considered as the most important device to develop one's skills in this area. Records help in diagnosis and treatment. It enables the caseworker to analytically reflect upon and improve his or her practice, thus, enabling efficient interviewing and intervention. As the caseworker gives the information collected in an organised and structured form, analysis and critical thinking becomes easier. Case records are essential

for refreshing the memory, especially when cases stretch for too long and the worker may lose track of detail. They also enable better planning for the next interview and provide the opportunity to rectify previous mistakes. This knowledge when passed on to a new worker ensures that the same mistakes are not repeated.

### **As an aid to administration**

Records, also serve as important tools of administration. They serve as an index for the correction of policies and practices. Further, they also give an insight into the caseworker's ability and ensure continuity if the caseworker is transferred, or resigns. They help the agency in not only evaluating the caseworker but also in the evaluation and reappraisal of the existing and as well as future services. Records are also of great importance when client is referred from one agency to another for specialised services, as they ensure continuity. Further, they allow sharing of information between agencies.

### **As an aid to teaching and supervision**

Recording as a teaching and supervision device is indispensable. Records aid teaching and supervision in that they add to the body of knowledge of social work and make this knowledge communicable. They provide an opportunity to the students to organise and present information and observations, reflection and action in a systematic manner. It is useful for reflecting on one's role and reactions in an interaction. Recording serves as a tool for supervision and evaluation whereby a teacher can encourage students to analyse and interpret data, expressing their individuality through it. Supervision encourages the cultivation of better recording skills and better casework as a result. It can be used in systematically training the students and is an important device to introduce students to practice.

### **As an aid to research**

Records can be used for social research and planning as they are the chief source of material for research done on such important subjects as the effectiveness of casework as a social work method. Records contain accumulated experience of social workers which can be translated into statistical form and thereby help in finding solution to social problems.

### **Purposes of recording in casework**

#### **As an aid to practice**

- Helps in diagnosis and treatment
- Enables more effective interviewing and intervention
- Contributes to analytical reflection and improvement in casework practice
- Useful for organising and structuring of information/aids orderly thinking
- Refreshes the memory of the worker/increases retrospective understanding
- Enables better planning for subsequent interview
- Useful as a guide to new worker in correcting past mistakes

- Useful as an index for correction of policies
- Ensure continuity if any caseworker discontinues a case

As an aid to administration

- Ability of caseworker can be gauged
- Useful for future reference
- Useful in evaluation of agency
- Allows sharing of information between agencies
- Helps in supervision and training of students

As an aid to teaching and supervision

- Adds to body of knowledge of social work, which is made communicable
- Enables students to develop analytical and interpretative skills
- Easy method of introducing students to practice

As an aid to research

- Useful for social research and planning
- Contains accumulated experience
- Can help in providing statistical data on social problems

**Check Your Progress II**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) Why do you need to write records?

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## 5.5 TYPES OF RECORDING

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From the literature available on casework recording no clear cut classification of records on the basis of their types is available. However, for our understanding we can give the following classification of recording:

- (a) Process (b) Summary (c) Verbatim (d) Non-Verbatim

### **Process Recording**

Process recording is a form of recording used frequently by the caseworker. In this type, the process of interview is reported and is a rather detailed description of what transpired with considerable paraphrasing. It preserves a sequence in which the various matters were discussed. It includes not only what both the worker and the client said but also significant reaction of the client and changes in mood and response. In this the interview and observation go hand-in-hand. It may be verbatim or non-verbatim reproduction.

### **Summary Recording**

Summary is a good device for organising and analysing facts. Summary points out the meaning and relative importance of material gathered. A careful summary made at appropriate intervals reduces bulk, clarifies direction and saves the worker's time. Summary is commonly assumed to be a review or recapitulation of material that has already appeared in the record. It may be either topically arranged or may appear as condensed chronological narrative.

Mrs. Sheffield has defined summary in social casework recording as "A digest of significant facts in the client's history which has previously been recorded". Summary could be a diagnostic summary, periodic summary or closing summary.

The closing summary is a summary made at the time the case is closed. To be most effective it should be written by the worker who was responsible for the case at the time of closing.

The periodic summary is simply the summary of material previously recorded and is made at more or less regular intervals or at the end of more or less definite episodes during the case study.

### **Verbatim Recording**

It is reproduction of factual data in the individual's own words. It is commonly used in casework because of its accuracy and objectivity. However, it should not become a mechanical reproduction of information because casework as an art requires an intelligent selection and rearrangement of material. As a part of training of the worker, verbatim recording may be of value in developing objectivity.

### **Non-verbatim /narrative recording**

Narrative recording has been and still is a predominant style of recording. It is the style found in newspapers and magazines. It is the way we speak of the day's events, it is the way we write letters, and it is the ways we keep diaries. Narrative form of recording is preferred for reporting acts of practical helpfulness, events and most collateral visits or conferences. It may be used for the contents of the interview in all instances except when the process itself and use of relationship have special significance.



### Check Your Progress III

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) What are the different types of recording?

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## 5.6 PRINCIPLES OF RECORDING

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How we wish, especially in the initial stages of practice, that there were some fixed rules and perfect procedures, which could guide us in writing case records. However, there is no such thing as an ideal or model record. Record is a flexible instrument, which should be adapted to the needs of the case.

Each case is different, the conditions of work hold marked differences and the recording therefore, rests not on following an outline, but in the mastery of certain component processes. Given below, are the attributes one looks for in a good case record whereby we can judge it to its merits. They can be termed as principles of casework recording as they serve as guidelines for writing records.

- 1) Accuracy, objectivity, simplicity, clarity and brevity should be observed in writing records.
- 2) Facts and their interpretation should be distinguished as it leads to objectivity. Inferences should be drawn in an impartial manner without attempting to influence the judgment of the reader (e.g., frequent fights between the husband and wife might lead the caseworker to interpret that she dislikes or hates her husband).
- 3) Record must be orderly in its arrangement and it is not possible unless the writer has thought out in advance what should be included and then has set out the material in a logical sequence.
- 4) A long record is not necessarily a good record. Records should neither be too long nor too short.
- 5) The casework records are not meant to be literary masterpieces, therefore they should be written in simple language and simple style.
- 6) A telling verbatim quote can sometimes depict a situation much better than a narrative description, therefore, wherever possible reaction of the clients should be recorded in their own words.
- 7) There should be certain degree of uniformity and standardisation as to the form of observation.
- 8) A record should have readability and visibility and should contain a clear and concise presentation of the material. (E.g. content can be organised under topical heading such as interviews, home visits, contact with collaterals. Letters, medical reports, etc., should be filed at appropriate place.)

- 9) To maintain clarity and accuracy avoid using words which are vague, ambiguous and likely to be misinterpreted by the readers. (e.g., “middle aged”, “perhaps”, etc.). Note taking as far as possible should be done immediately after the interview is over. If done during the course of interview it may not only hamper the full participation of caseworker in the process but may make the client feel that she is not getting the full attention of the caseworker.
- 10) Points like who are involved in the situation, which is addressing whom and what are the sources of information, should always be made clear.
- 11) The details of every significant subject or situation should be given.
- 12) One should not record the self-evident, the insignificant, the familiar, and the repetitive.
- 13) Any record should show clearly the nature of the problem presented or the request made; what the worker thinks about the situation; what the worker and client know about it; what relevant family group and community factors are involved; what are the changes or progress towards outcome.

**Check Your Progress IV**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

1) List any four significant principles of recording.

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## 5.7 GUIDELINES FOR CASEWORK RECORDING

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Record is a dynamic and flexible instrument hence no hard and fast rules can be prescribed. The casework record should reflect an orderly way of thinking which can be done through a flexible use of process, summarised and condensed recording so that the recorded material becomes a positive aid to the worker in his/her practice.

The following guidelines however may be observed:

**Maintain a field work diary**

While in the field you must carry with you a field work diary. This diary is used for writing events and incidences as they happen during the day. They may cover such things as names, addresses, dates, and details of interviews with the client and collaterals, observations, inferences and any other such relevant information. From this jumbled up data you are then expected to organise systematically the available information into a formal case record. The daily process record may comprise the following:

- a) Conduct the interview, write in narrative style the questions asked and the way they were answered or in other words write about the interview as it took place. The observation should be

suitably recorded such as the mannerisms, expressions, gestures, hesitation, silence, resistance, discomfort, emotions expressed, refusal to answer, certain questions, etc. The record should also reflect significant reactions of the client such as changes in mood and responses, body language, the subjects from which the client tends to shy away or finds difficult to discuss.

- b) Extra information on environmental factors, relationships with those around, others gathered during home visits or any other source could be mentioned. Letters or other such documents could be attached. At the end of the report you should give your inferences and interpretation. You should indicate the meaning you derived from the events and incidents and reasons for it. You should conclude by briefly outlining your plans for the next meeting or the next steps you propose to take, in other words your future plan with respect to that case. This may include:
  - 1) areas to be covered in the next interview
  - 2) collaterals to be contacted
  - 3) information to be obtained for the next meeting

### **How to Collect and Organise Data**

The caseworker can use the following tools and devices for collecting data:

- 1) Face sheet/Intake sheet
- 2) Eco-map
- 3) Genogram

#### **Face Sheet/Intake Sheet**

Face sheet or intake sheet as some prefer to call it is generally filled in at the initial phase of the casework process. Most of the social work agencies have a more or less standardised pro forma which has blanks for entries to be made by the worker related to the identification data such as name, age, occupation, family profile and other such information. The purpose of the face sheet is to give in a convenient form to the objective social facts or situation of the client, of a permanent character, to particularise the case.

#### **Genogram**

A family genogram is the graphic representation of one's family tree. It gives a pictorial representation of the members along with a chronological statement of significant events. It helps in assessing a person's psychosocial characteristics or the interactional patterns of the family. The caseworker organising the information can make it brief or extensive depending on the purpose it is to serve.

#### **Eco-map**

Though family experiences are significant, people are also greatly affected by the social context in which they live. Our record will not be complete if we do not depict this social context. An eco-map is an effective tool for this purpose.

According to Hartman (1978), an ecomap is an extremely useful tool for portraying the social context, because it provides a diagrammatic representation of a person's social world. In addition to presenting an overview of a person, family or household in context, the eco-map readily identifies the energy-enhancing and energy-depleting relationships between members of a primary social system, e.g., family or

household and the outside world. The graphic nature of the eco-map highlights social strengths and social deficiencies and helps to identify areas of conflict and compatibility. It often indicates areas where change may be needed. The eco-map is a natural adjunct to the genogram.

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## 5.8 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit, we have further studied some important aspects of the interviewing process namely the relationship of the interviewer and the interviewee and some specific interviewing problems. The establishment of a relationship between the client and the caseworker serves as a pre-requisite to successful interviewing and facilitates the whole interviewing process. Once a positive relationship is established, the client becomes ready to open his/her heart to caseworker. The caseworker presents himself/herself in the same warm and receptive ways to all clients during the interview. However, the client may respond and react differently. 'Transference' and 'Counter Transference' are dynamic factors that operate in casework interview and have to be dealt with maturity and competence. Some specific problems, which can be due to social, psychological factors or which can be specifically caseworker or client centered are sometimes likely to impede the casework interviewing such as biases, prejudices, lying, holding back information, etc. The caseworker has to be sensitive to these problems and consciously make efforts to overcome them when they intrude into the casework interview.

Once the purpose is accomplished the interviewing process is dissolved. Having conducted and completed the interview, the caseworker is now faced with the important task of recording, the interview and has to selectively decide which aspect of the interview was most significant and record it. The case record should contain a clear, concise, accurate and objective presentation of the material. It should be properly organised and should not be too long or too short and should be readable. Caseworkers should not only be "consumer of the practice of others" but "strive to be further creators of the practice".

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## 5.9 KEY WORDS

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<b>Counter Transference</b>	:	The worker may sometimes be unrealistic in his/her reactions to the client. He/she too may identify the client with some figure in his/her life and may bring into this relationship, distorted ways of relating.
<b>Rapport</b>	:	Rapport refers to the positive nature of the worker-client relationship.
<b>Transference</b>	:	By this we usually mean that the client displaces on to the worker the feelings and attitudes that he/she experienced in early childhood towards a member of his/her family and responds to the worker as if he/she was this person.

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## 5.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Hamilton, Gordon (1951), *Principles of Social Case Recording*, New York, Columbia University Press.

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## 5.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress I

- 1) Casework recording is a formal written account of the casework proceedings.

### **Check Your Progress II**

- 1) The purpose served by records can be broadly divided into four, namely:
  - a) As an aid to practice-Recording has added and improved the practice of social casework. It not only helps the interviewer towards effective interviewing but also permits and contributes to analytical reflection about the interviewing experience, and an orderly and organised thinking. It helps to refresh the memory of the worker and helps in planning for the next interview.
  - b) As an aid to administration-Recording serves as an important administrative tool for the correction of policies or in effective practices. It helps in providing services on a systematic and ongoing basis and it is through the reports, the worker can show to the agency, the work she/he has done.
  - c) As an aid to teaching and supervision-Records make supervision and teaching easier and effective. The students can be taught methods of improving recording and recording skills can be cultivated during casework teaching and supervision.
  - d) As an aid to research-Records can be used for social research and planning. They prove as the chief source of providing materials.

### **Check Your Progress III**

- 1) The records can be classified on the following types:
  - a) Process recording
  - b) Summary recording
  - c) Verbatim recording
  - d) Non-verbatim recording

### **Check Your Progress IV**

- 1) The four significant principles of recording can be stated as follows:
  - a) Accuracy, objectivity, simplicity, and clarity should be the guiding factors for writing records.
  - b) One should not record the self evident, insignificant, familiar and repetitive facts.
  - c) There should be certain degree of uniformity and standardisation as to the form of use of abbreviation.
  - D) The record should be written in simple language and simple style.



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