
PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SOCIAL WORKER

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Abstract: Current study presents professional qualities of social worker and summarizes his professional knowledge, skills and qualities. Like any other profession, social work also has its obligations and responsibilities. They are based on ethical norms and requirements. Ethical rules are set in the Social Worker's Code of Ethics. It represents standards of ethical conduct in professional relations with clients, colleagues, institutions and society as a whole.

Professional ethics is an integral part of the components that form the structure of the professional competence of the social worker. The term "professional ethics" refers to the set of requirements for the morality of the worker in each area of professional activity. There are common, valid for all professions requirements for labor morality, as well as specific for the specific profession or position.

In the context of social work, the issue of professional ethics is particularly important because of the often necessary need in the daily life of the specialist to confront ethical dilemmas, to make a choice between the purely human response and the professional solution, to observe and apply moral norms.

Moral categories in professional and educational activity are manifested in several ways: professional abilities; relations between the subjects in the pedagogical process; ethical relationship within the work team.

Professional social work also requires the need for other components in the structure of professional ethics considered as a helping activity, more in the context of social support and assistance, such as caring for the social well-being of people. Professional social work also requires the need for other components in the structure of professional ethics - confidentiality, support volunteering, anti-discriminatory attitude, the best interest of the client, etc.

Social work is among the professions that are realized and represent a special category - filled with humanity, compassion; a profession that requires love and concern for people, concern and responsibility towards their destiny, readiness for conscious and voluntary support in the name of their prosperity. It is these characteristics that can only occur when the social worker has high morals, values that are transformed into ethical attitudes and behaviors.

Keywords: Social worker, professional ethics, responsibilities, professional obligations, ethical code

The main goal and moral duty of the social worker is to help all who need it. The profession of a “social worker” requires that the worker has a variety of personal qualities, skills, knowledge, professional behavior and competence. At the same time, the social worker is also committed to his / her professional growth and development in order to always be adequate to the needs of his / her clients.

Professional ethics is an integral part of the components that form the structure of professional competence. It is a set of requirements for the morality of the worker in every area of the professional activity.

Todor Minev defines ethics in social work as a set of principles justifying the manifestation of morality, moral duty and the responsibility of the social worker. Leading place between them occupies:

- Attitude towards the client as a unique being;
- Obligation to vindicate social justice;
- Objective assessment of one’s knowledge and skills;
- Anti-discrimination attitude;
- Confidentiality;
- Work in the best interests of the client;
- Voluntary when giving support;
- Non-violence and condemnation of all forms of violence;
- Compliance with ethical norms (Minev, 2012: 141-142).

The Code of Ethics for Social Workers in Bulgaria was adopted in 2000 by the Bulgarian Association of Social Workers (BASW), a member of the International Association of Social Workers. BASW shares the human ethical norms and principles, which is clearly expressed in the content of the Code of Ethics.

In structural and content terms, the Code of Ethics of Bulgarian social workers is very close to those of other countries. It consists of four main points:

- Basics;
- Interaction with customers;
- Attitude with colleagues;
- Coherence with the profession.

Part of the Code presents basic ethical requirements for professionals, related to their functions, professional competence and behavior. These include:

- Adequate and timely professional assistance and support;
- Ethical behavior in professional interactions;
- Activities and intervention within professional duties and competencies.

In the relations with the clients as necessary elements of professionalism and ethics, common values and norms are derived such as:

- Proper behavior and demeanor towards the client;
- Providing access to information for the client;
- Coherence of interventions solely in the interest of the client;
- Honesty and integrity;
- Dedication, responsibility, non-discrimination, confidentiality, consideration for the personality of the client, respect, etc.

The third part of the Code includes texts related to the relationship between colleagues. They primarily regard respect, solidarity, honesty and responsibility towards other specialists in the team. The structure of collegial ethics also includes such requirements as:

- Consideration and respect for the knowledge and competence of colleagues;
- Readiness for assistance and help when needed;
- Avoiding conflicts of interest.

The last point draws out the basic requirements in the context of ethical behavior:

- Assistance in raising the level of team work and accordingly the authority of the organization;
- Activity and proceedings to vindicate the moral principles of the profession;
- Commitment to improving the quality of social services, respectively the well-being of people and society as a whole.

Among the main duties selected on the basis of an overview of job descriptions, the following can be highlighted:

- Organizing and conducting activities;
- Strict execution of the Manager's instructions;
- Observing the rules at work;
- Keeping the documentation;
- Organization of meetings;
- Getting help and guidance, etc.

In order for professionals to carry out their professional duties, their personal qualities also occupy a significant place. Rozalia Kuzmanova defines and divides qualities into general and specific. General qualities are those qualities that every professional in this field should have, such as: empathy, sympathy, goodwill, compassion, etc. The specific ones include: flair, promptitude, logic, consistency, sieving the important from the insignificant, etc. Emphasis is also placed on the charisma, which in itself evokes trust and attitude for helping (Kuzmanova-Kartalova, 2013: 70).

Pepa Miteva reflects the skills related to the ability to recognize the problems, to familiarize the people in the client's environment with his/her problems, to build hypotheses, to mediate, to have knowledge about the programs, etc. (Miteva, 2006: 51).

In general, professional knowledge, skills and qualities can be summarized as follows (Zdravkova, 2015: 59-80):

Table 1

Contingent	Knowledge	Skills	Qualities
Children and people with disadvantaged social status	For social and social conditions; For economic development; For legal and regulatory acts; About the system of social services and benefits; About the opportunities for employment; For pension insurance; About the peculiarities of age differences and needs, etc.	To assess the social environment and the factors of social disadvantage; To detect and differentiate the type of problems; To analyze needs, personalities and abilities; To use the resources of the environment; For cooperation; Analytic skills; Implementation of laws and regulations, etc.	Respect for human dignity; Social justice; Goodwill; Empathy; Consideration; Emotional sustainability; Tact; Commitment; Teamwork; Optimism; Faith in the client's resources; Combination;
Social and social-pedagogical work with children and persons at risk or victims of violence	For the symptoms of deviations from normal development; For legally guaranteed guardianship and protection opportunities; About mechanisms for dropping out of the education system; On the forms and methods of psychological and pedagogical impact; For violence prevention policies; About measures for protection in cases of violence, etc.	To diagnose learning difficulties; For planning strategies and interventions; To implement effective pedagogical and educational approaches; For counseling and advising; For the detection of signs of violence; To identify types of violence, etc.	
Socio-pedagogical work with children and families with impaired personal functioning and problems in interpersonal communication	For the family as a social system; For interfamily relationships and interactions; For parenting styles and strategies of upbringing; For social factors provoking deprivation, frustration and other psycho-behavioral reactions; For the environmental factors influencing the family system and others.	For communication; For creating trust relationships; For pedagogical impact; For risk management; For the promotion of personal change, etc.	Ethics; Flexibility; Observability; Content; Self-control; Activeness; Organization; Initiative, etc.
Socio-pedagogical work with children and persons with deviant behavior and in conflict	About the factors of deviant behavior; For policies to prevent deviant behavior;	To detect and diagnose behavioral abnormalities; To prevent deviant behavior;	Non-judgmental attitude; Insight; Resilience of Will; Impartiality;

with the law	Measures to reduce deviations among adolescents; For reasons provoking criminal behavior; For a system for correctional work with children; For penitentiary system; For relevant authorities and others.	For Hearing and Understanding; For counseling and persuasion; For encouragement and stimulation, etc.	Persistence; Initiative, etc.
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From the above listed knowledge, skills and qualities that are needed by the specialists to help and support the people in social disadvantage, it is obvious that their work is very responsible. In many cases human life or the health of a child or an adult depend on their judgment and decisions. There are many situations of social hardship. Knowledge of laws is not the only key to successful realization. To fulfill the professional commitments, there must be both a sense and a desire to be able to fight the injustices and unrest.

We come to the question “Is it a profession or a vocation to be a social worker?” This is not a profession, but rather a vocation. Few people remain in the sphere. Too heavy is the mental burden and the responsibility that is carried for others. A person needs to have the attitude and the flair to work this or it is just no good. There are things that are not taught at the university. A Person either carries them as personal qualities or he/she will never feel them with his/her heart. The job is specific; it is related to people, more precisely with people’s troubles and problems. You must have the desire to support and listen to them. Want to help them. Believe in their capabilities, even if no one else does.

The social worker, even with experience, can not always be emotionally indifferent. Involuntarily he/she experiences the problems of others, thinks about them - how he/she can help them, how he/she can be useful. Social workers sympathize and do not always finish their working day with the end of working time. There are occasions when to meet with the client, they sacrifice their day off, because this is the time convenient for the client. Sometimes social workers have family problems because they do not have energy for themselves and their relatives. No one can understand them because they can not talk about their work. This is confidential information between a social worker and a client.

And it is entirely true to claim that to be a social worker is a vocation!

Only the devotees and those who really accept the profession as their vocation can practice it successfully and fulsomely.

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