

Essential Skills for Social Work Practice

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Role play in social work practice is a vital element because it helps students to integrate theory into practice and prepare for real tasks in the field. Role play instills confidence and helps students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and in turn develop the best strategies (Driscoll, 2018). Besides, social workers have the opportunity to question their personal values, ethics, and beliefs and determine whether they are congruent with values of social work. Social workers need to have a better understanding of family system for them to carry out an effective family relationship assessment (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2016). Social workers should understand that techniques or approaches that are used in one family cannot be effective when used in the upbringing of another family. Having the idea in mind is important and forms the basis of planning a successful remedy process for a family (Patterson et al., 2018). This paper is a reflection of personal experience during social work role play and describes, assesses, and recommends areas of improvement of a colleague's role play video.

#### **Reflect on your experience in doing the role-play video**

The role play simulation was a great moment that provided me with practical experience that enabled me to test my foundation and questioning skills, confirming what is said and heard, probing deeper, and drawing a contact to a close. Role play is regarded as a method of acquiring skills, knowledge, and values of social work practice. During the role play, I had an opportunity to take the salutation of the client as mine and stepped into her shoes and reflected on it. From the experience, I affirmed that empathy is a critical role in the success of social work practice (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2016). After listening to my client on the situations that she went through, I reflected on how I would feel if I were in her shoes something which triggered my emotions and decided to offer the best help and service possible to ensure that the woman and her child are safe and free from abuse.

Moreover, during the role play I realized that when getting message across one should be listened to but should make the other party feel that the other is in control. Also, having a good introduction gives the client a clear picture of what to expect and canals determine the extent to which the person opens up (Patterson et al., 2018). From the introduction, the client can know if his or her problems will be solved and provides as much information as possible. Therefore, I ensured that my introduction was clear and my client was free with me and never felt like I was in control. As a result, my client felt valued and was able to open up more on the critical issues which led to coming up with the best possible remedy for her situation. When a client feels appreciated and valued, they become open and provide critical information that help social workers come up with best solutions for their problems.

Other than proper introduction and empathy, the role play gave me an opportunity to put to test my communication skills. During the ole pal, I had the opportunity to ask about sensitive issues (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2016). Besides, I had the opportunity to respond to client's issues. Also, I paid close to client's verbal and non-verbal communication to get much information about her. As a result, I asked leading questions that helped in getting more information.

Lastly, I realized the importance of having a clear understanding of laws and regulations that govern social work practice and human rights. Having a clear understanding of the law enable a social worker make informed decisions based on clients' condition and the stipulated laws to ensure that all decisions are backed up with the prevailing laws (Patterson et al., 2018). As a result, my client had the opportunity to be escorted to go and pick her belongings. The escort was to ensure that she is not abused or denied access of her belongings.

**Describe insights you gained from the experience and explain how these insights affect your approach to practice.**

Following the role play, I gained a lot of experience and had the opportunity to put theory into practice. First I realized that it is important to have a clear introduction before engaging a client because it provides the lead to the client. When a client's knows that he or she is dealing with a professional, the chances of being open and providing critical information is high which in turn led to provision of sufficient remedies. Also, I learnt that communication skills of being a good listener and speaker are critical in the social work practice. Also, being empathetic and making a client feel that you are not in control makes the client comfortable and feels appreciated and valued. Generally, I learned the values, ethics, and skills required in social work practice.

**Describe the challenges you experienced in planning and executing the role-play scenario and explain how you overcame them**

Other than the success achieved during role play, I encountered some challenges which I have to address for future improvement. The first challenge I noted is lack of clear introduction on my profession and role as a social worker. As a result, I will have to ensure that I provide details of my qualifications, roles, and the role of the organization that I am part of to ensure that client is aware of what services we offer to the society. Also, the issues of boundaries was a challenge whereby I did not know the extent to which I would go in asking critical issues without offending the client. The task involves much of personal information and knowing which questions to ask the client is important. Therefore, I have to learn more on ways of getting more information without making a client feel offended or getting involved too much on private issues.

**Describe the specific engagement techniques/skills you used and analyze why you used them**

During the role play, I used three engagement skills (listening, patience, and empathy) to ensure the success of social work practice. Customer service involves direct engagement and requires active listening and having a dialogue with the client (Patterson et al., 2018). Therefore, I actively listened to my client to ensure that I understood her predicaments and make her feel valued. Also, during the social work, patience and empathy are critical because rushing to solve client's issues and understand what they need can hurt their feelings. Therefore, being patient and listening to what a client's require and stepping into their shoes makes them feel valued, appreciated, and comfortable (Parker & Ashencaen, 2018). As a result, they can provide critical information that helps in proper decision making which in turn leads to success in both parties.

**Describe the colleague's role-play video you selected.**

From my colleagues' role play video, I selected Laquinta Lee's role play video. The video involves a client has come to seek advice on the issues he is facing. The client is not employed and therefore is seeking for employment. Also, the client has social issues whereby he is struggling to cope up with his environment. Laquinta therefore promises to help the client find a job and guide him through his adaptation to his immediate environment.

**Assess what your colleague did well in the video you selected and recommend areas for improvement in your colleague's approach**

In the video, Laquinta gives an overview of the client before he gets in which indicates that they have had a communication earlier. As a result, she does not provide a detailed introduction to the client on who she is, her role, and the role of the organization in

the society. However, during the conversation, it is evident that client is facing social and employment issues which the organization can help him achieve. Above all, the video could have been great if it was done as if the two were meeting for the first time.

### **Conclusion**

Learning requires practices so that the skills acquired in theory can be put in practice. Role playing is not about acting but it is about imaginative experience and identification with social situation of the service users (Parker & Ashencaen, 2018). Therefore, feedback should be given in a constructive way to help people reframe and improve in future. From the role play, I have learnt the importance of introduction, empathy, active listening, and having a good understanding of the environment and the prevailing laws (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2016). As a result, one can make decisions and provide guidance that would solve the problems a client is facing while at the same time acting within the set laws. Generally, role play is an important aspect of learning in social work practice because it equips and prepares social workers for real tasks in future.

## References

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