**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**


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**9.7 Process Recording**

**PURPOSE:** To establish a record of the social worker’s practice so the process of helping and client-worker interaction can be studied.

**DISCUSSION:** Process recording is a detailed form of recording often used to assist students and new workers in learning practice skills. It is also used when a worker is having unusual problems with a client and wants to create a record that can be examined by his or her peers, supervisor, or consultant as a basis for making suggestions on how the worker might overcome the problems.

A social work student’s process recording might include the following components:

1. Names of those in attendance at interview or meeting
2. Date, location, and length of session
3. Purpose of session (i.e., why client and student were meeting and how this session fits within goal of intervention)
4. Student’s plan for session (i.e., what student hoped to accomplish and how)
5. Description of interaction and content—for example:
   - how session began
   - significant exchanges during session (e.g., what client said and how student responded; what student said and how client responded)
   - specific topics discussed, decisions reached, plans made
   - new facts and information obtained by student
   - mood and feeling tone of session
   - how session or meeting ended
6. Student’s role and activities (e.g., techniques and skills used during session; roles and responsibilities taken on by student during session)
7. Student’s assessment of client’s concern, situation, or problem and client’s current response and reactions to student social worker and to helping process
8. Student’s assessment of his or her own performance during the session (e.g., problems encountered, strengths, limitations)
9. Student’s plan for next interview or meeting with client

A process recording is an excellent teaching tool because it encourages the worker to analyze his or her practice behavior and decisions. A major disadvantage is that it requires a great deal of time to prepare. Many experienced social workers
recommend the process recording of at least one case in a worker’s caseload. A careful and detailed study of even one case can prove valuable for skill development and increase self-awareness.

Audio- or videotape recordings are, in many respects, superior to process recording as a teaching tool. However, many agencies do not have video equipment; even if they do, it often requires that the interview take place in a studio atmosphere in order to escape background noise. Compact camcorders may expand opportunities for students and workers to study their own performance. Although audiotaping an interview can be useful, listening to an audiotape is tedious. Workers must be especially careful about the ethical matters of informed consent and confidentiality when using audio and video recordings.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

9.8 Managing Time at Work

PURPOSE: To make the best possible use of limited time.

DISCUSSION: Nearly every social worker is faced with the problem of having too much work and too little time. Thus, the worker must use time-management skills as a way of increasing efficiency on the job. Consider these guidelines:

1. Come to terms with your resistance to using time-management principles. Do not hide behind the claim that you are too busy to get organized. Some people appear busy because they are always in motion, but activity does not always mean that something is being accomplished. Make sure your activity is productive.

2. Understand your agency’s mission and your job description. Unless you are clear about what needs to be done, you cannot figure out ways to do it effectively and efficiently. If your assignments and responsibilities are not clear, discuss them with your supervisor or administrative superiors. Find out what tasks and assignments are of highest priority within the agency.

3. Recognize that in order to be effective and efficient, your job must be consistent with your personal and professional values, goals, and style. A mismatch between what your agency expects and what you can do or want to do is a recipe for frustration for both you and your colleagues at work.

4. Be proactive, not reactive. Anticipate the tasks that need to be accomplished—and the problems or delays that may arise in completing those tasks—and then take action. Do not procrastinate.
The Dual Perspective

PURPOSE: To graphically depict barriers and supports that affect a person’s interactions with his or her social environment.

DISCUSSION: Among the helping professions, one of social work’s unique contributions is its emphasis on understanding the client within the context of his or her social environment. Norton’s (1978) dual perspective brings this conceptualization alive in practice. She identifies two distinct sets of influences that make up a person’s social environment: the nurturing environment and the sustaining environment.

One’s nurturing environment (or immediate environment) is composed of family, friends, and close associates at work or school. These are people with whom a person interacts frequently and often in an intimate manner. It is in and through these relationships that a person develops a sense of identity, belonging, and self-worth. These relationships have a profound effect on one’s functioning.

A person’s sustaining environment is made up of the people one encounters and learns to deal with in the wider community and broader society, including, for example, political organizations, work settings, labor unions, the media, educational systems, health care facilities, and human services programs. (A social worker and a social agency are also part of this sustaining environment.) Ideally, the individual is accepted, respected, and supported within both his or her nurturing and sustaining environments, but this is often not the case.

Of special concern during the assessment phase of the change process is the question of whether an intervention should be directed toward elements of the nurturing environment or toward the sustaining environment. The dual perspective helps to answer that question. For example, if the nurturing system is positive but the messages from the sustaining system are negative (e.g., a minority child from a supportive family who feels devalued when in school), the social worker needs to focus on changing aspects of the client’s wider environment. If the messages from the nurturing system are negative (e.g., the child abused by his parents), arranging a positive sustaining system experience can help compensate for these negative influences but the social worker must focus primarily on changing interactions within the family. Finally, and most difficult, are those situations where both the sustaining and nurturing environments give negative messages to the person. An example of this double negative would be a gay or lesbian adolescent who is rejected by his or her family, by peers at school, and by the wider society. In that situation, change efforts would need to be simultaneously directed toward helping the adolescent cope with the rejection, helping the family understand and accept the adolescent, and changing community attitudes toward gays and lesbians.

The concepts of a nurturing and a sustaining environment can be translated into a simple assessment tool for identifying the location of both the supports and problems a person experiences in the social environment. To make a dual perspective assessment, one begins by recording on a chart (see Figure 11.2) the positives...
and negatives in the client’s situation as you understand them. Begin with the person. List in the inner-most circle the characteristics and capacities of the client and indicate with a (+) or (−) the effects they have on his or her functioning. Make a few notes in the margins to explain the reasons for arriving at this conclusion. Next, move to the center circle—the nurturing environment. Write in the names of key actors in the client’s situation and again indicate if they are a positive, negative, or neutral (0) influence. Once again, add some description to clarify the rationale for your judgments. Finally, do the same for the circle representing the sustaining environment. Some social workers have found it useful to conduct a dual perspective assessment directly with clients to check the accuracy of the judgments and help clients gain insights into the issues they face.

Examination of the completed dual perspective worksheet will reveal both the areas that need to be changed (i.e., the –notations) and the areas of strength (i.e., the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Nurturing Environment</th>
<th>Sustaining Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immediate Family</td>
<td>Expanded Family</td>
<td>Close Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Community</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Political System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Resources</td>
<td>Education System</td>
<td>Social Welfare Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger Societal System</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
+ notations) that might be resources for accomplishing change. With an accurate problem and resource assessment completed, it is then possible to begin planning appropriate interventions.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

11.3 Genograms and Ecomapping

PURPOSE: To graphically depict family and interactional data as an aid in the social assessment process.

DISCUSSION: A genogram is a diagram similar to a family tree. It can describe family relationships for two or three generations (an attempt to depict more than three generations becomes very complex). The ecomap drawing places an individual or a family within a social context.

In addition to their value in assessment, the genogram and ecomap can shorten the case record. Descriptions that might require two or three pages of narrative can often be reduced to a single page of genogram and ecomap diagrams. For example, a typical record or social history will include information such as the following:

- Age, sex, marital status, and household composition
- Family structure and relationships (e.g., biological children, stepchildren, parents, etc.)
- Job situation, employment, and responsibilities
- Social activities and interests (hobbies, recreational activities, etc.)
- Formal associations (church membership, participation in union, membership in service club, etc.)
- Sources of support and stress in social interactions (between people and between people and community systems)
- Utilization of community resources (Medicaid, economic assistance, public health, mental health, schools, Social Security, doctors, etc.)
- Informal resources and natural helpers (extended family, relatives, friends, neighbors, self-help groups)

All of these data can be “drawn” into a one-page ecomap.

Although the user of these diagrams can create his or her own symbols and abbreviations, certain symbols are commonly used, as shown in Figure 11.3. Words and notations—such as “m” for “married,” “div” for “divorced,” and “d” for “died”—may also be used in the family diagram and ecomap.
as they help you), those where it’s mostly you helping them, and those where it’s mostly
them helping you. OK, let’s get their code numbers on the grid.

Now think about how close you are to the people in your network. Divide the
cards into three piles—those people you are not very close to, those you are sort of close
to, and those you are very close to—and then we’ll put a code number for them.

Finally, just a few questions about how often you see people, and how long you’ve
known the people in your network.

Divide the cards into four piles—people you see just a few times a year, people
you see monthly, people you see weekly, and people you see daily. (Note: If you see
someone twice or more than twice a week, count that as “daily.”) OK, we’ll put their
numbers on the grid.

This is the last question. Divide the cards into three piles—those people you have
known less than a year, from 1–5 years, and over 5 years.

Now we have a pretty complete picture of who is in your social network.

It is important to remember that the Social Network Map and the Social Net-
work Grid do not objectively describe the client’s support but rather reflect the
client’s perceptions and beliefs. It is quite possible that a client may exaggerate or
underestimate the importance of some people and simply forget to name others.

Once the map and grid have been completed, the social worker engages the
client in a discussion of how the client might reach out to and use identified social
supports. Whether the supports are likely resources will depend on the nature of the
client’s problem or needs and the client’s willingness to use them.

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Informal Support Resources for High Risk Families. Seattle: School of Social Work,
University of Washington, 1989.

11.5 Life History Grid

PURPOSE: To graphically depict significant events in a client’s life and/or the development of
significant problems through time.

DISCUSSION: The life history grid is a method of organizing and presenting data related to the var-
ious periods in a client’s life. The grid is especially useful in work with children and
adolescents, where an understanding of life experiences during a particular stage of
development may shed light on current functioning. Data from a variety of sources
(interview, agency records, hospital records, etc.) are brought together in a life grid.

Figure 11.8 is a grid prepared on David, a 14-year-old referred to a social
worker because of behavior problems. When one examines David’s life history grid,
it becomes apparent that his problems have grown worse in reaction to his parents’
**FIGURE 11.8  Sample Life History Grid**

**Client: David**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td>Father 21,</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Normal birth</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother 18</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Billings, MT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asthma, hospital, 3 days</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Denver, CO</td>
<td>Donald born</td>
<td>K—Lewis &amp; Clark School</td>
<td>Asthma, broken leg</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dad drinking a lot</td>
<td>I—very fearful of school</td>
<td>Car accident, broken leg</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Did not like school; Frequently sick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Butte, MT</td>
<td>II—new school</td>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Lots of fights at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dad fired from job</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>Cub Scouts</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mother takes job</td>
<td>IV—poor grades</td>
<td>Asthma attack</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Steals money from mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Appendectomy</td>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Ran away from home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Denver, CO</td>
<td>Parents separate and mother moves</td>
<td>VI—poor grades</td>
<td>Asthma attack/hospital</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Breaks classmate’s nose in fight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>VII—truancy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Paper route</td>
<td>Alcohol &amp; fighting</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Mother &amp; kids move to Helena, MT</td>
<td>Parents divorce</td>
<td>VII—new school</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hits teacher, suicide gesture</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dad killed in car accident</td>
<td>Freshman at Big Sky HS</td>
<td>Tried out for football; did not make team</td>
<td>Pot smoking, arrest for shoplifting, poor grades</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
escalating marital conflict and eventual divorce. Also, there appears to be a relationship between his asthma attacks and significant family changes. Thus, we see that a life history grid can help a social worker formulate hypotheses about the origin of problem behavior and suggest focal points for intervention.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### 11.6 Life Cycle Matrix

**PURPOSE:** To graphically depict the developmental stage of all persons in a household.

**DISCUSSION:** An assessment should consider the client’s stage in the life cycle and the developmental tasks common to that stage. This is especially important in work with families because the various members are at different points in the life cycle. The use of a matrix can help the social worker organize his or her thoughts about the family members and the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs associated with a particular stage of life.

Table 11.1 presents an overview of life cycle stages intended to remind the social worker how developmental tasks change over time. The concept of developmental crisis reflects the belief that psychosocial development proceeds by stages; each stage represents a time to decide between hanging on to the old or letting go and moving on to a new way of thinking and behaving.

Figure 11.9 depicts a household made up of a father, mother, three children, and a grandmother. The importance of considering the developmental stage of each member of a household becomes apparent when we recognize that certain tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Member</th>
<th>Developmental Stage (age)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0–1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret (Grandmother)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John (Jr.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. To what tasks and activities do the adults and older children devote their time? For example, how many hours each week are devoted to paid employment? Travel to and from work? Child care? House cleaning and laundry? Cooking? Shopping? Medical and health care? Education and training? Study and homework? Clubs and organizations? Religious activities? Recreation and leisure? Reading? TV? What portion of each day and week is spent at home and with other family members?

16. What are the interpersonal payoffs of troublesome behavior? To understand a troubled family, the social worker must see beyond the problem behavior and develop working hypotheses about why members repeatedly engage in interactions that create so much distress and misery. Two interrelated themes of family interaction explain many problem and nonproblem behaviors: the desire by a member for closeness versus his or her desire for distance and the member’s desire for belonging versus his or her desire for independence. People want intimacy but not to be oppressed by the closeness. Also, people want to be part of a family but not to be consumed or controlled by family loyalty. When observing the family’s struggle with a problem, the worker should constantly ask: How does this behavior bring the family members closer emotionally or create a feeling of belonging? How does this behavior promote a sense of separateness and independence?

17. Who supports and who opposes change? Whenever a change is being considered, some degree of resistance can be expected. However, family members will differ in the degree to which they will oppose change. In order to assess support and opposition, the social worker might ask the family members to speculate on the effects of a hypothetical change. For example, the worker might ask: “How would a move to another city affect your family? How would each family member try to adjust to this change?”

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11.13 Multiworker Family Assessment Interviews

PURPOSE: To secure an understanding of how each family member views the family’s presenting problem or concern by utilizing more than one social worker during family interviews.

DISCUSSION: A multiworker family assessment interview is conducted after the social worker assigned to the case (i.e., the primary worker) has conducted an initial interview with the family. If this worker decides to use a multiworker assessment, it is explained to the family. Once the family agrees, secondary social workers are temporarily assigned to each family member (e.g., if there were four family members, four additional workers would be needed). Each secondary worker then spends an hour or so
listening to their assigned family member’s perspective on the family’s problem and attempts to understand how that member sees himself or herself within the context of the family system. After these individual interviews are completed, the secondary social workers and the primary social worker meet for about an hour and share what they have learned about each family member. Meanwhile, the family members spend this time together without a social worker being present.

Next, all of the social workers and all of the family members meet together. Each secondary social worker sits next to his or her family member and speaks for that person; each speaks as if he or she were the family member and uses I-statements to describe his or her thoughts and feelings about the family’s functioning. During this phase, the family members are not to speak. If a family member does not like what is being said, he or she and the social worker can leave the room, discuss the difference, and then rejoin the group. After all of the social workers have spoken for the family members, the family members are asked to react to what they have heard.

The last part of this session is used to plan the next steps in the family’s effort to secure help with their problem. After this multiworker assessment, the primary social worker continues to provide service.

Although this assessment process may take from three to five hours, it has important advantages, such as the following:

1. A great deal of information is gathered and each family member’s point of view is expressed and explored. The workers are often able to say things that the family member is afraid of saying, thus the issues are out in the open.

2. The family members usually leave this lengthy assessment session feeling they have been listened to and understood. Typically, the process yields a firmer commitment by the family members to work on the problem, a feeling of hopefulness, and ideas on how to make changes.

3. The process has the effect of creating several consultants who have firsthand knowledge of the family, which can be helpful to the primary social worker.

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**


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**11.14 The ABC Model and the Behavior Matrix**

**PURPOSE:** To achieve greater precision in the observation and analysis of client behavior.

**DISCUSSION:** Social workers often look to behavioral analysis and behavior modification for techniques of helping clients learn new behaviors or eliminate problem behaviors. The influence of behavior-oriented approaches has done much to help practitioners be more precise in data gathering and assessment. Two tools commonly used in behavioral analysis, the ABC model and the behavior matrix, are particularly useful.
While discussing feelings, the client should be helped to understand that feelings and emotions are a normal human experience. Because feelings are real and important, they should not be denied. Although some feelings are pleasant and some unpleasant, they are neither good or bad. How one chooses to behave in response to feelings may be appropriate or inappropriate, but the feelings themselves simply exist and are neither right nor wrong in a moral sense.

A feelings list can prove useful in work with individuals, families, and groups. If you believe the use of a feelings list would help your clients, the authors suggest that you prepare one consisting of words that will be meaningful to individuals served by your agency. A client’s age, life experience, culture, and educational level need to be considered when compiling a list. (Also see Item 8.6 for additional information on emotion.)

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**


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**13.22 The Life Book**

**PURPOSE:** To help a child in a foster care or adoption placement develop a sense of identity and understand his or her experiences with separation and placement.

**DISCUSSION:** The *life book* is both a therapeutic tool and a personalized record of a child’s life experience. Backhaus (1984) explains that a Life Book is an individually made book covering the child’s life from birth to present, written in the child’s own words. It generally includes a narrative describing what has happened to the child, when, and why, as well as what the child’s feelings are about what has happened. The book may also incorporate photos, drawings, report cards, awards and certificates, letters from previous foster or adoptive parents and birth parents, a birth certificate, a genogram, and anything else a particular child might want to include. . . . Life Books . . . can be invaluable for those being adopted, living in foster or residential care, or returning to birth parents. (p. 551)

The life book is especially useful in helping a child do the following:

1. Develop a sense of continuity and identity.
2. Understand past separations and placements and reduce confusion and misconceptions about these and other disruptive experiences.
3. Avoid the unhealthy use of fantasy and denial in trying to cope with painful life experiences.
4. Remember significant people and childhood events.
5. Maintain in one place a record of important personal data (i.e., birth and medical information, pictures of family and significant others, school records, etc.).

The worker involves the child in the creation of the book and refers to it when discussing the child's life experiences and his or her feelings about those experiences.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


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### 13.23 Client Advocacy

**PURPOSE:**

To secure services that the client needs and is entitled to but unable to obtain on his or her own.

**DISCUSSION:**

When the social worker assumes the role of client advocate, he or she speaks, argues, bargains, and negotiates on behalf of a client. This form of advocacy is also termed case advocacy, in contrast to what is known as class advocacy (see Item 13.35). An advocacy stance may be necessary when a client has been unable to obtain services to which he or she is entitled; has been subjected to discrimination or unfairness by a professional, agency, or business; and is unable to respond effectively to these situations. Because advocacy is a form of confrontation and one cannot be sure how those to be confronted will respond, some risks are involved in choosing this tactic. The worker should remember these guidelines:

1. Make sure your client wants you to become his or her advocate. Do not engage in advocacy unless you have an explicit agreement with your client and he or she understands both the potential benefits and risks. To the extent possible, involve your client in all decisions concerning the actions you will take.

2. Realize that your advocacy can damage your relationship or your agency's relationship with another agency or professional and that this damaged relationship may create problems in the future when you need their cooperation to serve other clients. Do not use advocacy until you have tried approaches with fewer risks or that are less likely to polarize the affected parties.

3. Your decision to assume the role of client advocate should arise out of a genuine desire to be of service to your client and never from a wish to punish or embarrass another agency or a desire for self-aggrandizement.

4. Before you select this confrontational tactic, be sure you understand the facts of the matter. Do not base your decisions on hearsay or on a one-sided description...
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


13.25 Crisis Cards

PURPOSE: To help a client manage a recurring troublesome situation.

DISCUSSION: Crisis cards are a set of 3” × 5” cards on which the client has written various suggestions to himself or herself on how to cope with and manage a situation that could easily escalate out of control. For example, if the client is a father who is easily angered by his son’s rebellious behavior, crisis cards might be used to help the father maintain self-control during times when tensions are high.

The suggestions written on the cards are ones identified by the client during discussions with the worker. Brainstorming may be used to identify the various options. They must be ones that make sense to the client and are likely to work, given the client’s patterns and circumstances. For example, the father just mentioned might prepare the following seven cards:

- **Card 1:** Remember that this will pass. Don’t do anything foolish! Remember the times when I was a kid and also drove my parents nuts.
- **Card 2:** Look at the family photo album and think of happier times.
- **Card 3:** Read my Bible and pray.
- **Card 4:** Call my friend Jim, and ask him to listen to my frustration.
- **Card 5:** Work out on my weight-lifting set.
- **Card 6:** Cook one of my favorite meals.
- **Card 7:** Walk to the store and back.

When the father finds himself getting angry and in danger of losing control, he refers to the cards and looks for a suggestion that might help him control his anger.

In addition to helping the client prepare a set of crisis cards, it is usually important to help the client work out a system for recognizing when he or she needs to use the cards. For example, the father could be helped to formulate a 10-point anger scale, ranging from 0 (no anger) to 10 (close to being violent). As the father learns to monitor his level of anger, he comes to recognize that at point 5 on the scale, he is to refer to the crisis cards.

The crisis cards technique can be adapted for use in work with whole families. For example, during a family meeting, the members might brainstorm various op-
tions on how they could better handle recurring conflicts or misunderstandings and then write the options on a set of crisis cards. A set of cards might also be used by someone learning to cope with a newly acquired disability or a difficult job-related task. Such cards and self-messages can also be used by someone working to maintain sobriety or trying to change a behavior pattern (e.g., keep to a diet, stick with a program of physical exercise, etc.).

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SECTION B
TECHNIQUES AND GUIDELINES FOR INDIRECT PRACTICE

Due to the complexity and multiple layers of decision making in organizations and communities, facilitating change in these large systems is usually a time-consuming and labor-intensive process. The social worker engaged in these activities should recognize that these complex social organizations were built by people and can be changed by people, but the process of changing them is often difficult. Typically, large system change efforts must be sustained over a long period of time, although occasionally intensive work on a project during a somewhat limited time period is as effective. Successful outcomes depend on such factors as timing (Is the organization or community ready to consider alternative ways of operating?), knowledge of alternative programs (Are there viable solutions to the issues being addressed?), and the involvement of key people in the organization or community.

**Intervention Activities.** Like all social work practice, much of the activity by social workers to change human services organizations and communities is based on relationships. As compared to direct-service practice where the central relationship is with clients, these relationships are with administrators, board members, the media, elected officials, and others who may be in a position to make or influence decisions. Many of the actions of the social worker to interpret problems or promote changes in the functioning of the agencies or the community occur through informal conversations with decision makers. We sometimes neglect to consider these actions as intervention, yet they serve to promote change.

Some actions by social workers in organizations and communities are best described as maintenance or incremental change activities. Much of that work is geared toward facilitating teamwork, resolving disputes within an agency, generating ideas for new or innovative services, raising funds for programs, or developing grant applications. These forms of intervention are central to improving the services to clients or the future clients of human services agencies.
**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**


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**14.7 The Client Self-Rating Scale (CSRS)**

**PURPOSE:** To enable a client to visually track movement toward desired outcomes.

**DISCUSSION:** Clients find it helpful to receive feedback regarding the progress they are making. The social worker’s verbal appraisal of progress is important, but when that is supplemented with a visual representation of change, the client’s clarity about what is occurring is increased. A simple format for helping clients visualize change is a *client self-rating scale (CSRS)*, a specialized form of single-subject design.

The first step in developing a CSRS is to clearly state in positive terms each goal identified by the client and worker as a target for change: for example, “I want to increase the number of conflict-free interactions with my brother, John” or “My goal is to complete my homework assignments each night before 10:00 P.M.” For each goal, the worker creates a chart. If some goals are interrelated, progress toward more than one goal might be recorded on the same chart. The chart is designed so that along the left axis scores from –10 to +10 are recorded. The most accurate way to determine the scores on this axis is to establish, in collaboration with the client, descriptors (or anchor points) reflecting the criteria for assigning scores (see Item 14.1). For example, –10 might reflect “I did not get any homework completed,” –5 might be “at least two nights I completed all of my homework,” a score of 0 could indicate that “homework was completed three nights that week,” +5 might reflect “at least four times all homework was completed,” and +10 could reflect “I always completed all of my homework.” Along the bottom axis the dates of each session with the client are recorded as the process evolves (see Figure 14.9).

At each session, the worker and client discuss the client’s improvement (or deterioration) in moving toward each desired outcome. The client then arrives at a self-rating, and the worker records the score on the chart. If the ratings related to more than one goal are included on a single chart, the scores can be recorded with different colors or by using solid, dotted, and dashed lines.

The trends reflected on the charts can be discussed with the client to identify factors that have influenced the scores. This visual representation of what has occurred helps clients identify and possibly decrease resistance and barriers to change as well as experience a sense of success.
To terminate the professional relationship between social worker and client in a timely and responsible manner.

Closing a case, or terminating services to a client, should be viewed as a planned component of the helping process. When deciding if termination is appropriate, the following factors should be considered:
other symbolic recognition can be important concluding activities that terminate the process.

**Evaluation Activities.** A number of techniques are available for evaluating indirect practice. Some are used in conjunction with the evaluation of an agency’s workers (see Items 14.9 and 14.10). Other techniques that offer guidelines for a comprehensive program evaluation are described in Item 14.11, and, finally, Items 14.12 and 14.13 suggest ways to assess the ongoing efficiency and effectiveness of the agency’s operations.

### 14.9 Peer Review

**PURPOSE:**
To have colleagues evaluate the quality of a social worker’s practice by comparing his or her activities against a set of established principles and standards.

**DISCUSSION:**
The process of peer review refers to a periodic examination of a social worker’s performance by a fellow worker who understands the agency’s clientele, policies, and procedures. Essentially, peer review is a form of quality control. Some settings, like hospitals, are required by accrediting organizations or regulatory agencies to establish peer review systems.

The first step in developing a peer review procedure is for the social workers to agree on a set of principles or criteria that reflect good practice in their particular setting. In order to keep the process relatively simple, the number of criteria should probably not exceed 10. Those participating also need to agree on the procedure for selecting cases to be reviewed. The random selection of cases from a worker’s active case file is a common approach. Peer review sessions should be regularly scheduled (e.g., monthly); a single session should be limited to about one-half hour. A system of rotation ensures that each worker has a chance to conduct a peer review on all other workers in his or her unit or department. This can be a valuable learning opportunity. Results of the review should be recorded on a form. A recurring problem found in the performance of an individual worker may require remediation. And a recurring problem among all of the workers may signal a system problem and the need to examine existing policies and procedures.

Figure 14.10 (p. 500) presents an example of peer review for a five-worker unit form within a family agency. Many variations are possible.

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**
Policy: Each social worker will participate in an ongoing cycle of peer review and consultation. The supervisor will be responsible for developing the peer review schedule. Each month, each social worker will have two cases reviewed by a peer and will also review two cases of another worker. The cases will be drawn at random from the worker’s active case-load. The reviewer will complete the peer review form and submit it to the supervisor.

On a quarterly basis, the supervisor will analyze the peer review reports, identify common performance problems, and meet with staff to formulate a plan to address common performance problems.

Schedule

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<th>Reviewer</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>December</th>
<th>January</th>
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Monthly Peer Review Form

Date __________ Social Worker ________________________ Reviewer ________________________
Case name and number ___________________________________________________________________

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1. Client problem(s) clearly stated in record.
2. Client/family members involved in treatment planning.
3. Written treatment plan in record.
4. Intervention methods are appropriate for client’s problems.
5. Frequency and duration of client contact is appropriate for problem.
6. Treatment planning, worker’s action, and approach used reflect concern for permanency planning.
7. Appropriate and effective use made of community resources.
8. Progress toward goals is evident.
9. Case recording is clear, concise, and descriptive.
10. Required agency forms completed and included in record.

Other comments: ________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

FIGURE 14.10 Sample Peer Review Policy and Review Form
Using Humor in Social Work

PURPOSE: To make use of humor as a counterbalance to the frustration often experienced in professional practice.

DISCUSSION: The appropriate use of humor can help social workers cope with job-related stress. A number of activities can encourage humor in the workplace:

- Devote the first five minutes of each agency staff meeting to sharing jokes or to describing “this week’s most embarrassing moment.”
- Create a humor bulletin board on which staff can tack jokes, cartoons, comic strips, and so on. Create a second board and invite clients to post humorous items.
- Design a staff training session on how to use humor to handle stressful situations or the effective use of humor in work with clients.
- Develop a lending library of humorous books, articles, and tapes.
- Keep a file of jokes, anecdotes, and humorous agency stories from which ones can be selected and shared with staff at times when comic relief is especially needed.

Poking fun at our professional shibboleths and sacred cows is a first step toward developing a social work humor. For example, one might ask: How many social workers does it take to change a lightbulb? Responses might include the following:

“I hear you saying that you are concerned about the lightbulb. Tell me more about that.”

“Is the lightbulb the thing you most want to change about your situation?”

“The lightbulb doesn’t need changing; it’s the system that needs to change.”

“None. It’s no longer a reimbursable activity.”

“We don’t change lightbulbs; we empower them to change themselves.”

An irreverent look at our professional jargon will also uncover some humor. For example, Brown (1976) offers the following definitions:

*Crisis Intervention:* Technique for rapid transfer of anxiety from client to social worker.

*Unmotivated:* Frequently stated reason for termination of services. What is not clear, however, is who is being described—the client or the social worker?

*Intake:* The process by which clients are screened out or screened in—depending on what is needed for the agency’s annual report.

At times, humor is an effective tool in direct work with clients. Social workers should view the use of humor as they would any other technique: It may or may not be appropriate or helpful, depending upon the client and his or her situation. Factors
such as a client’s age, culture, ethnicity, education, or gender may determine whether a particular use of humor is perceived as funny or offensive. It is recommended that the professional helper conduct a “humor assessment” before using humor in a practice situation. Such an assessment might include questions like these:

- Tell me about the last time you had a good laugh.
- Can you recall something funny that happened in recent weeks?
- Would you tell me your favorite joke?

The client’s responses to such questions will indicate his or her receptivity to humor and capacity to perceive humor in a practice situation.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


16.6 Dealing with Sexual Misconduct

**PURPOSE**

To prevent or address issues of sexual misconduct and sexual harassment in the context of social work practice or education.

**DISCUSSION**

The structure of professional relationships is inherently unequal, making clients vulnerable to exploitation. Clients enter the relationship in order to receive assistance from a competent professional and trust the worker to treat their needs and interests as primary. In turn, it is expected that the professional will be responsible to avoid any misuse of this trust and will not exploit the client in any form (i.e., financial, sexual, or in any other way of personal gain). In addition, professional responsibility requires that any social worker in a position of power avoid manipulating that situation for personal advantage. For example, a supervisor should not manipulate a supervisee, an administrator should not take advantage of workers for personal gain, or a teacher or a field instructor should not manipulate a student.

The *NASW Code of Ethics* (1996) provides guidance in several areas in which there is a potential conflict of interest for a social worker in practice or employment situations. In recent years, there has been growing recognition that the potential for sexual exploitation in the human services is high and professions have begun to take strong positions when sexual misconduct occurs. Section 1.09 of the *Code of Ethics* is explicit in prohibiting sexual contact with clients, the relatives of clients, and former clients, as well as providing services to persons with whom the social worker has previously had a sexual relationship. In addition, Section 2.07 of NASW’s *Code of Ethics*