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SOCIAL WORK - CHALLENGES OF PROFESSION

The importance of social welfare can hardly be denied nowadays. Social workers are a hot commodity in the 21st century and should continue to be in-demand members of society. Due to economic, social and political problems of Ukraine people are desperately in need of those who are able to support them through difficult times and ensure that vulnerable people, including children and adults are safeguarded from harm. The role of social workers is to provide support and help in order to improve outcomes in people's lives. They maintain professional relationships with people, acting as guides and advocates.

The main tasks of professional social workers include case management (linking clients with agencies and programs that will meet their psychosocial needs), medical social work, counseling (including psychotherapy), human services management, social welfare policy analysis, community organizing, advocacy, teaching (in schools of social work), and social science research. Some social workers work as psychotherapists, counselors, or mental health practitioners, often working in collaboration with psychiatrists, psychologists, or other medical professionals [2].

What are the key factors which make you a successful professional of this sphere? Firstly, previous work experience in an area relating to social work is extremely important for entry into the profession. This may be through paid positions or voluntary work and can include roles in community care centers, working with children or with vulnerable adults. Any roles that show you can demonstrate empathy, along with a genuine desire to improve the quality of the lives of others, are helpful. Secondly, the efficiency of your future career choice also depends on the level of training, knowledge and what is more important – your personal characteristics, qualities, ideological position of life. Social workers must create for themselves a system of values, which is consistent with the essence and content of social work, social norms, and traditions.

According to A. Markova [1, c.188], the model of specialist consists of two main components: a model of personality and a model of professional. The first provides the basic requirements of professional identity, emphasis professionally important qualities and features. The second one regards to analysis and description of typical problems and methods of their solution during the professional activity. As very often social workers need to use their professional judgment to make tough decisions that might not always be well received by those they are trying to help.

Being a senior student of Social work Department I started to wonder how I can make myself stand out from the crowd of qualified applicants to get a desirable job in this sphere. When applying for a position, it is essential to market your specialized social work package, so an employer can easily assess your candidacy based on how qualified you are and the reasons you better fit than the other competitors. Having read some articles [3] I got to know that the strength of your professional promotional tools may be the most vital piece of your social work career marketing. These tools include resumes, cover letters, your elevator speech, and interviewing skills—anything you can use to get

a job interview and ultimately get a job offer. Luckily, nowadays there are lots of useful websites full of tips and advice which can help an applicant to develop their skills in a necessary way (e.g.

: <http://www.socialworker.com/feature-articles/career-jobs/10-essential-tips-for-your-amazing-social-work-resume/>).

No matter how great your social work experience and how strong your resume is, if you cannot effectively communicate these skills to employers, you will not get the job. Job seekers should clearly realize what will be expected of them and show the potential employer that they have the knowledge and motivation to be a successful employee. Besides all the mentioned above aspects, social workers are expected to have superior organizational and information management skills. They may be responsible for managing multiple clients or projects and often must maintain detailed records. Social workers should also possess discretion and a good understanding of ethical standards. The ability to find resources and think outside the box when doing so are also key attributes. They need to have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the policies involved in coordinating services for clients [4].

The number of Ukrainians requiring social assistance is rising. A lot of people are affected by the war in eastern Ukraine. It also requires the development of appropriate infrastructure and the provision of social assistance. Social workers are faced with a different set of strategies and interventions.

Thus, all of us must do their best not only to achieve our personal goals but also meet the challenges of the modern society and help its most vulnerable elements.

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