

Andia Bernard

Professor Roberts

SWK357: Field Experience and Pre-practice Seminar

February 27, 2022

Chapter 7- Journal 5

The population I am working with is people with IDD, when I think of my strengths, communication, being emotionally aware, dependability, flexibility, optimism, and self-motivation come to mind—having these traits assist me in facilitating and advocating for the mentally disabled. One of the strengths I mentioned above is communication; knowing how to communicate with someone with autism requires patience and positivity. Communication became natural for me once I developed those skills, even if the clients were non-verbal. I was not always patient, but I took the time to know the individuals and understood their unique behaviors and wants. I know how and when to ignore irritating attention-getting behavior. If I slow down my conversation to their level and speed, I can understand their needs as they express their feelings. Remaining calm and respectful goes a long way in such a population.

One of the biggest mistakes one can make is trying to empower someone. The Oxford dictionary defines "empowerment" as "authority or power given to someone to do something." Or "the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights." When one tries to transfer power to someone else, they think they need them. As if one cannot function independently, they need to ask permission from the one transferring the power to do things. As a helping professional, I can encourage others by letting them know all they acquire is already inside them, especially with the population I am working

with. This remarkable bunch of people have been stigmatized, said no to, and struggled to find themselves and fit into society. As a social worker, it's my assignment to construct the most suitable surroundings that permit them to come into themselves. Therefore, the implications of the statement "You cannot empower anyone; only a person can empower him or herself" is true. Self-empowerment is a great tool to have because it helps one make deliberate and conscious decisions. For the population I am working with, it is good to encourage them to make findings for themselves. However, due to the mental impediments, it's advisable to advocate to help promote confidence and let them know that they oversee their destiny as long as they are not harming themselves. I consider such action a teachable and learning experience for the people and myself. And most importantly, they are humans who should be treated as such irrespective of their limitations.