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**Swk499: Integrative Seminar**

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**Reflective Assessment on Competency**

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

- **In what ways have I accomplished this competency/practice behaviors?** The way I have accomplished this competency/ practice behaviors is by first acknowledging that all of my practicum participants have all the fundamental human rights no matter what situation they are in. While working with youth that have been incarcerated I have learned that many of these kids have experienced human rights violations. For example, I met Tim, a 14 year old boy that was accused of committing a robbery. After discussing his arrest I learned that Tim had been interrogated without any legal representation which then led to his arrest. As a future social worker, I look forward to advising my client on how to avoid self-criminalization and how to avoid giving up their Miranda rights especially while working with youth.
- **How has my thinking changed over time?** Throughout my time at my practicum, my thinking had changed from thinking that youth in marginalized communities were always looking to participate in criminal activities to understanding that they are oppressive and discriminating systems that are put in place to take the freedom from young Black and Latino males. I also have become more aware of how society, social economics, and the environment plays a major role in depriving people of basic human rights within marginalized communities. Another experience that changed my way of thinking was when I advocated for a movement called “*Right to Remain Silence*” in my field placement. This movement helps bring awareness of what a person can do to avoid being harassed by law enforcement. It also promotes bail reform and educates people on their rights. We also had people sign a petition for congress to pass a law that would raise the age of young people getting charged as adults.

- **What are the practice behaviors that indicate my competency in this area?**

Some of the behaviors that indicate my competency in this area are when I engage in activities that promote social, economic, and environmental justice. In my previous writings, I mentioned two examples that show me practicing competency 3. First, when I sat down with Tim and explained to him what is his right when being interrogated by law enforcement. Second, I indicated this competency by advocating for a law to be put in place so that young teenagers stop getting charged as adults.

- **What curriculum content areas (social policy, practice, etc.) relate to successfully completing this competency?** A curriculum content area that relates to this competency successfully is social policy. During my *SWK357 Field Experience* course I wrote a personal essay that explained how during my field experience I had learned to understand the needs of my participants and how they can be suffering from discrimination and oppression on all three levels: micro, macro, and mezzo. Working on a micro level and helping individuals is a great way to bring change, but I have noticed that focusing on the macro level and changing social policies can cause a greater impact throughout the community. Forming alliances and working together with local communities and politicians on putting laws in place can help bring longer change.

- **What learning experiences helped me to accomplish this competency?** The experiences that helped me to accomplish this competency were during my course *Swk 355: Social welfare class*. Throughout this course, I learned that we can contact our local officials and address our concerns with them via social media, Letters, or public hearings. During this class, my professor had me write a letter to someone in public office. I wrote a letter to a local community leader that had the power to write legislation for congress to better the safety of people living throughout the Bronx. Another experience that has helped me with this competency has to be when I accompanied my practicum participant to court. During their court case, I make sure that they are receiving social justice and that they are knowledgeable about their human rights.

● **What “gaps” can I identify in my learning experience? What will I do about these “Gaps”?** The gap I identify in my learning experience is understanding the psychoeducation my participants are receiving. I still haven’t been able to fully grasp the way to understand my participant's way of thinking by reading their assessments. There are so many different factors that can impact a person’s behavior that it makes it difficult to understand why a person behaves the way that they do. What I can do to fix this gap is to read more about human behavior and spend more time with each participant to try to understand them better. I would also have to apply Critical thinking and the multiple theoretical perspectives of human behavior which I learned from the *SWK 314 Human Behavior course*.

● **Professional Growth Plan, identify goals for continued personal and professional growth and discuss how you plan to reach these goals).** As stated before, my goal is to continue understanding my clients by spending more time with them on a personal level. This means going out with them and getting to know what they enjoy doing, what they did when they were younger, and what places they like to visit. As well, I would continue studying the different theories that are out there to understand how the human mind works.

### Integrative

- **Analyze the basis of the client system’s representation as an at-risk or oppressed population. How are human rights being violated? This section may include library research.** The at-risk population I am working with are young Black and Hispanics teenagers facing incarceration. Throughout the Bronx, there are many young teenagers falling victim to discrimination and biases by the Polices Department. I have been working with participants that are concerned with their safety and freedom because they feel like they are being targeted. For many years, the NYPD have been known to target Blas\cks and Hispanics young men throughout the bronx. Stop and frisk, broken-windows policies, and extensive marijuana arrest had been ways that the NYPD

had violated the human rights of many individuals. It has been proven that the pattern of arrests disproportionately targets African Americans and Hispanics.

- **What strategies did you use or would you use to advance justice in this case?** The strategy that we use is to provide an alternative to incarceration. Instead of having young people mess up their futures by spending time incarcerated, we provide them with assistance and resources to maintain their freedom. We supervise them with curfew calls and school attendance so that when it is time to face the judge on the case that they were referred to, they have a more positive outcome and we are allowed to stay out of jail.