

Leadership Inventory Assignment

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In the book responsive leadership in social services the author Stephen De Groot defines leadership as “a process by which an individual or individuals inspire the attitudes and behaviors of others to engage in value-based and purpose-critical efforts in order to accomplish a set of shared objectives.” (G., D. G. S. (2016)). Therefore, leadership involves having a person or people that inspire others toward a change in behavior and a common goal. As social workers it is our responsibility to engage in this type of leadership. Whether that is through supervising employees, leading groups or group therapy sessions, leading in community change efforts, or even advocating for policy change; leadership plays an important role in who we are and the overall effectiveness of our position as social workers. With that being, in order to be an effective leader in the field of social work, it requires the social worker to assess and evaluate themselves within this field. In what areas does the social worker do well? Are there any areas that need improvement? Are there any potential biases or prejudices the social worker may have that could potentially harm a client? How would the social worker rank their overall progress and effectiveness as an effective and ethical social worker? This Paper will discuss my opinions on my overall strengths, limitations, biases, and skill set within the field of social work. I will also discuss my overall vision, mission and the professional values I have in regards to my future as a licensed social worker.

Strengths, limitations, biases and skills

To gain a better understanding of how I am evaluating I plan on using sections within the “Preferred Leadership Profile” and the “reflective questions for use in supervision” questionnaire to determine my strengths, limitations, biases and skills within the field of social work.

Strengths

When it comes to the strengths I believe that I possess within this field of social work, I believe that there are multiple tasks and activities that I feel confident in accomplishing (Scottish Social Service Council. (2017)). For starters, while doing my internship at The Salvation Army, I feel confident in my ability to advocate, Manage casework, and work collaboratively with other volunteers and employees. In the beginning of my internship, I was juggling up to 8 different programs at once which was really overwhelming at the time. However, I took the time to advocate for myself and now I am strictly the case manager for two programs. Programs that also allow me to use the same level of advocacy on behalf of my clients who are at risk of eviction or the termination of their utilities. Since this change in position, I have been able to effectively manage all of my cases in a timely manner with help and collaboration from my supervisor and various employees located outside of our Middletown location (Salvation Army Headquarters or other Corps). I have also had the opportunity to lead, train, and delegate tasks to other volunteers for specific programs. For example, in regards to our organization's Christmas Assistance program. I was responsible for completing and verifying applications for this program. However this program was receiving over 500 applications, some of which weren't in English. Therefore I was tasked with leading a team of volunteers to help me go through all of these applications. One volunteer that was responsible for managing our Spanish application (since I am not fluent in the language), and one volunteer that was responsible for scheduling appointments for clients to

come in and complete their applications. I also took the time to train both of these volunteers on how to finalize these applications, so they can complete them on the days that I am not working.

Limitations and Biases

With my strengths in mind, It is also important to reflect on the tasks and activities that I feel less confident or worried about as well (Scottish Social Service Council. (2017)). One thing that I realized about myself while working in this field is that I am a task oriented person. When there is a problem, I am quick to offer solutions, which has its advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, I am showing empathy by taking the time to assist and provide resources for this client, but on the other hand, sometimes I feel like this prevents me from truly empathizing and building relationships with my clients on a more personal level. For example, when I have a conversation with clients, sometimes there are words said by the client that are opportunities for me to connect with them, but I end up missing the opportunity to ask more about their statement or body language because I am so focused on the issue at hand. Empathy is an important part of social work and although I feel like I do a good job at providing task or object related empathy, I know that building relationships are important and are something I need to work on as I progress within this field. In regards to biases, however, I feel like Alliance University and the Salvation Army have really taught me the importance of diversity and the dignity and worth of a person. Growing up, I used to be very intimidated by the Hispanic and African American community, mainly because I never felt accepted by them as a Hispanic or even as a minority in general. However, due to the diversity of Nyack College/Alliance University I ended up making great connections with people from these cultures, so now I don't feel as intimidated by them anymore. In fact, the diversity I experienced at Nyack truly prepared me for the type of

populations I am currently working with at The Salvation Army. Not only by providing me opportunities to learn about different cultures, but also encouraging me to practice my Spanish so I can meet the clients where they are at by speaking their language.

Skills

Lastly, in regards to the type of skills I have learned while in this field, The “Reflective questions for use in supervision” questionnaire provides a rating chart consisting of various social work practice skills. In this rating chart, I realized that I ranked myself the highest in the following categories; digital skills and collaboration. (Scottish Social Service Council. (2017)). When it comes to my digital skills, I believe that I have shown great skills in scanning and sending emails. I also feel confident in my ability to create, record and digitally file appropriate documents into our shared drive. Collaboration wise, running our rental and utility assistance programs has provided me with multiple opportunities to gain confidence in my ability to work alongside clients and other individuals. Because of these positions, I have had to learn how to confidently and effectively communicate with these other parties so we can attend to the needs of our client. Alternatively, the categories in which I ranked myself the lowest include the following categories; flexibility and resourcefulness (Scottish Social Service Council. (2017)). I don’t think that I am not skilled in these areas, I just believe that my skill level is average and could be better. This is due to the fact that although I have no issues juggling and prioritizing tasks, I believe that when a change occurs that requires a major shift in my caseload, I get flustered and end up having cases that manage to slip through the cracks. For example, last semester when I was running 8 different programs at once, I struggled to adapt to this change and ended up falling behind or losing clients due my lack of flexibility. In regards to resourcefulness, I believe that I

am effective in referring clients to other programs related to rent and utilities, but overall, I am not a hundred percent knowledgeable about other programs or resources within my community. For example, I have had multiple clients asking for information about legal aides or mental health resources. Something I wasn't able to answer due to my limited knowledge on the programs and resources within my community.

Vision, Mission and Professional Values

When I look at the Salvation Army mission statement, what resonated with me the most is when it states that “its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.” (About us: The SalvationArmy USA. About Us | The Salvation Army USA. (N.d.)). This resonated with me because I believe that God called me into this field of social work for a reason. Although I may not be able to openly share my faith with clients or in this field, I believe that no matter what comes next, I want to be able to spread the gospel through how I love and serve others. At the beginning of this journey, I didn't know what I wanted to do within this field of social work, but being here at The Salvation Army truly inspired me to realize this passion. I like what I do at The Salvation Army and how we serve our community. I appreciate how this organization truly sticks to its mission statement and understands the importance of human relationships and the dignity and worth of a person. I love that I have the opportunity here to meet people where they are and provide them with steps or resources to help them address their situation. With what I have been through in my life, I understand what it feels like to feel hopeless or stuck in their situation. That is why I am passionate about social work and helping others so they don't have to go through what I went through. Not by giving them all the answers, but empowering and working alongside my clients

so they can work toward hopefulness and self-sufficiency. (G., D. G. S. (2016)). One day, I would love the opportunity to put this mission and values into practice by one day having a community center or non-profit organization of my own. A place that provides multiple services in one location and unites multiple helping fields into one place that is designed to serve the community. A place that not only provides social work services and services I am familiar with such as rent and utility assistance and food pantry, but also partners with individuals from other fields like lawyers, counselors or even teachers who are able to provide counseling services, pro-bono assistance or even after school programs for children.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this assignment has taught me a lot about myself and the type of social worker I want to be in the future. It not only taught me about my strengths in advocacy, case management, and working collaboratively with others, but it also made me aware of my limitations, biases and skills as well. I learned that one area of social work that I want to grow in is my ability to empathize and build personal relationships with my clients. This paper has also made me aware of my biases towards the minority community and how much Nyack/Alliance University and The Salvation Army has taught me how to deal with these biases. In regards to my social work skills I believe that this “Reflective questions for use in supervision” questionnaire confirmed these strengths and limitations, but also provided insight on my strengths in digital skills and my limitations on flexibility and resourcefulness as well. Lastly This paper truly allowed me to reflect on the impact The Salvation Army has had on me and how this has impacted my overall mission, vision and the professional values I plan to carry with me as I enter this social work field after I graduate.

References

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