

Competency 10: The students will integrate professional social work practice with their faith, developed through understanding a Christian worldview.

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SWK 499 Integrated Seminar NA

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March 06, 2023

• *In what ways have I accomplished this competency/practice behavior?*

I have attained this expertise and practiced conduct by living my faith morally, uprightly, and courteously. Seeing that faith isn't a concept to disregard but rather something to explore in practice with those with the same belief has proven successful when working with my clients. The existence of a spiritual side to people must be acknowledged. People use a human-in-environment perspective to comprehend how biological, emotional, and social factors influence them.

• *How has my thinking changed over time?*

I know who I am in Christ, and if He called me to pursue this vocation, He would give me the tools I need to help those He puts in my path. As a result, my Christian faith has never interfered with my professional practice. My perspective gradually shifted when I realized there is a separation of church and state and that, as a social worker, I cannot force my beliefs on anyone. I am aware that the code of ethics was created for us to use as a guide, and I have done so without violating any of the tenets; I have even exercised my faith in a place that is not religious. I've seen that social workers are distinctive people with their principles, values, and views. My faith in Christ is why I selected this line of work. My professional aspiration was to follow in Christ's charitable deeds. I am a moral person and a Christian social worker. I had to have firm beliefs, a strong foundation, a heart, built-in justice, and love to become the person I am today. If I abandoned my thoughts, I would not be able to succeed and develop in my work. My passion for my faith has been reinforced through social work. "Jesus is among you as one who serves," says Luke 22:27. Jesus taught us to do for others, so as devout followers of Jesus, we too must serve others. Helping someone out when they need it is part of the act of serving

others. The basis for Christlike service is a sincere love for the Savior, concern, and passion for those whom He gives us chances and directions to aid.

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

When evaluating clients, I use the engagement phase to learn about the client's religious affiliation. If the client is a Christian, I still do not impose my beliefs; instead, I wait for them to bring up God before interjecting. In our one-on-one session, a client expressed gratitude to God and said they would not be alive without Him. That was the ideal time to include this ability, so I did so then.

• ***What curriculum content areas (social policy, practice, etc.) relate to completing this competency?***

Among the classes that are helpful for me in fulfilling this competency are SWK 242, 246, and 324. My understanding of social work was better shaped through these classes. In SWK 246, I learned that communication with compassion, as demonstrated by Christ, could be effective with all kinds of clients and how important it is in social work as a generalist. By engaging with disadvantaged persons and communities in empowerment through humility, as Christ teaches us, I gained knowledge and skills for working with individuals, families, groups, and organizations. The course gave me a deeper appreciation for my dedication to this profession and helped me realize why I wanted to pursue it in the first place. To integrate my faith into my practice, I learned how to do so without feeling afraid.

• ***What learning experiences helped me to accomplish this competency?***

Through my internship experiences, I was able to develop this competency. I asked a client how she was doing while conducting her treatment plan; she said she felt sad because her mother had recently passed away. Her mother passed away after two years of cancer treatment.

Near the end, her mother was in discomfort, which kept her up at night. She could accept her mother's death because of her faith in God. Despite her disappointment that God had not granted her request, she recognized that not all prayers are answered. I asked her if she was okay with my praying for peace and healing for her and her family at this trying time. She accepted my request, and we prayed together. She went on to say that her mother had given her faith, and she is confident it will remain so throughout her life. In our talk with my client, I learned how vital trust is to her. In my engagement with her, I should consider religion a strength for many people and a crucial component of supportive partnerships.

• *What "gaps" can I identify in my learning experience? What will I do about these "gaps"?*

My internship experience allowed me to establish a strong sense of self and think about how to advance as a social worker. I am aware of my beliefs and that not everyone believes in Christ. I am not troubled by Christ telling us to travel to the ends of the globe to save souls. But when I'm at work and feel moved to spread the message, I realize I can only do it if my client requests it. Then, and only then, would I share my faith and values. My obligation is to help clients with their problems, which is my focus. My faith continues not to affect how I practice social work, but it contributes to and strengthens my learning. Understanding how to blend my confidence with working in a secular organization is where I still have much to learn about social work and Christianity. Because of my expertise and code of ethics, I can bridge any gaps from working in the material world by simply honoring the client's preferences and values.

• *In your professional growth plan, identify goals for continued personal and professional growth and discuss how you plan to reach these goals.*

I want to increase my knowledge, study, and grow as my profession develops. I want to further my education as I improve at my job. It would be a wonderful experience to work in the

Christian sector and learn more about the mental health profession, but even if that is not possible, I would still do my best because of the knowledge I have gained from my studies and fieldwork. I have received high-quality guidance from my mentors and excellent supervision. I want to advance my career by getting a license and practicing more.

Integration

● ***What is your understanding of how Christian faith and social work can be ethically integrated? Provide examples.***

It is emphasized in the NASW Code of Ethics that religion is an area of diversity. Within this well-known holistic, biopsychosocial-spiritual framework, my main goal as a social worker is to evaluate the client's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health and how much help they need. My beliefs should remain at the forefront of my mind as a social worker, as in any other practice area. My commitment to my client must be based on their interests and ensure I do not impose my beliefs on them. I believe faith and social work can be ethically integrated. Even though I don't work in a faith-based agency, I do get to talk about my faith sometimes with clients. The issue of faith only arises once a client brings it up, but my faith is still a core part of my practice. In my second practicum, I remember talking to a distressed client. I inquired about the client, and she replied that she was okay. Days later, she sought me out. Seeing how much the client wanted to talk, I knew there was a problem. The client admitted that they felt out of place, had tried out homosexuality, and thought they had finally found bliss. Furthermore, they mention their faith in God and the knowledge that he does not inspire this novel practice. I was surprised, yet I could still remember what I had learned and why I chose this line of work. Even though I might have been biased, I decided to set my opinion aside and concentrate on the client because, when the client is sitting in front of me, it's all about them. I explained to the client that

God is a loving and kind God. Regardless of their background, I explained to the client that everyone has a great sense of dignity and worth since God wholly and profoundly loves them. This is more than just religious rhetoric, gay or straight; ultimately, their God wants what is best for them.

- ***Discuss any times when you have practiced social work with compassion.***

One morning while I sat in the cafeteria, I saw one of our clients spending a significant amount of the morning alone. A few employees approached her to see if she was alright, but she snapped at them. I sat and watched everything happen, and then, after about thirty minutes, I got up and sat down next to the client. She mumbles a halting "hello" after I say "hello." I asked if I might sit with her, and she responded, "I guess." So I remained quiet for a while; neither of us spoke. I finally asked her how she was doing and how her day was going. She seemed to be looking down for a very long time. Finally, she raises her head and says, "I didn't have breakfast, I don't have any money for lunch, and I'm hungry." I responded by saying I was sorry to hear that and that I was about to grab something to eat because I, too, was feeling peckish. I told her to get what she wanted and that I would pay for it. "Are you sure she asked?" I affirmed it! She got what she wanted. We returned to our table, and this girl told me so much. I believe demonstrating compassion comes naturally as I advance in my field. Empathy is one of the qualities a social worker needs to succeed in this line of work.

- ***Discuss when you have demonstrated humility in engaging disadvantaged persons and communities toward empowerment.***

My first semester at AU comes to mind. One of the criteria for an academic life skills course I took was to do 21 hours of volunteer work at the Holy Apostle Church, which provides services to homeless people in Upper Manhattan. I am fortunate to have been actively helping

others in need because service comes naturally to me. Another instance of interaction with underprivileged people was when I was around 17. It was around Thanksgiving; I recall handing my mother my paycheck so we could purchase more food. I then went to the Staten Ferry, served the meal we had prepared, and fed everyone camped there. Most people are frequently handicapped by terrible circumstances, not by their choice of bad events. One day, I want to transform the world, one individual at a time. My goal is to help those in need by feeding the hungry, comforting the sick, pursuing justice for the underprivileged, and giving them hope and opportunities. With God, all things are possible!