

York College
The City University of New York
Social Work Program
SOCIAL WORK 360:HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Dr. Susan Letteney

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Assessment Assignment

Aims

Upon completion of this assignment, the student will demonstrate the following:

- Skill in ordering complex data about individuals and families:
Using a systems/ecological model of assessment
- Skill in using APA format in the text and for the reference list
- Use of basic library research skills
- Knowledge of the ways of selecting concepts that are most relevant to a problem

You have been told that the social work courses have been purposefully sequenced. This is a good illustration of the need for sequencing. When you reach SW 410, you will be required to make assessments on individuals and families. A good grasp of this assignment will make the assessment that you must do in SW 410 easier for you.

Essential Preparation

This assignment requires an assessment on a client and the client's family. The individual client usually comes to the agency for help, but often the family is also in need of assistance from the social agency. You will have to use your imagination to construct a client/family with certain problems, a social work setting from which the client/family is securing services, a family history, and the complex environment for the ecological transactions. You must consider: personality, class, roles, culture, organizational behavior, environment, biology, etc. All of you have some familiarity with social service agencies. You also know people with problems that might motivate them to secure services at a social service agency. You are now being asked to use this knowledge to develop a *fictionalized* transaction between the agency and the client.

Format of Paper

The paper should consist of the following three (3) sections:

- I. An Intake Form (1 page)
- II. An Assessment Narrative (4-6 pages)
- III. A Reference List (1 page)

I. The Intake Form

The face sheet is referred to in many agencies as the Intake Form. The face sheet should include your fictitious identifying data. Give the identified client's surname, maiden name of mother, address, social security #, sex, DOB, marital status, and occupation. List all members of the family or household, give their DOB and occupation, and grade in school for children. If a child is absent from home, in placement, or living with relatives, this should appear on your face sheet. Details of the placement or absence should appear in the narrative section.

Use the APA manual for any aspect of the composition of the paper on which you have questions. APA style should be used for paragraph indentations, margins, pagination, citations in the text and for your reference list. Attach the pages with a stapler. It is not necessary to use folders. Place a cover sheet on the front of your paper. Include *only* your name, the name of the assignment, semester, and date. Pages should be numbered in the upper right corner. Refer to the APA manual regarding margins and headings.

Note: Confidentiality

Social agencies do not have a right to gather information that has little potential use in helping the client. If an agency does so, it may be a violation of confidentiality. When your agency gives you a list of information to gather on a client, make sure you have a clear understanding of the reason for collecting each piece of data. If clients ask you the reason for asking a certain question, you should be able to explain the potential value of this information in the helping process.

II. Assessment Narrative

The assessment narrative part of this assignment should be between 4 and 6 double-spaced, typewritten pages. You should include in this section: The referral source, or (if the client was not referred) your exploration of the manner in which they learned of the service and the source of this information; the reason for the referral; the precipitating events that led the client to seek help at this time; the history of the presenting problem, including length of problem and attempts made to resolve the problem.

You must use and incorporate concepts from required reading(s), and class lectures throughout your paper. Use theories discussed in Unit 8 to explain your client's behavior.

A. Presenting Problem and Source of Referral

When clients are referred by other agencies, note the way the referral source prepared the client for the services of your agency. Does the client feel coerced into seeking help, or is the request for help voluntary? Clients who are mandated by some other source such as courts or child welfare, are often referred to as "involuntary" clients.

Usually, when you explore the presenting problem, you will find that the person has related problems that are more difficult to speak about. Often, the person identified as the person needing help, or the “identified patient”, is not the family member who is experiencing the most severe problems. The presenting problem is often the problem that can be spoken of with relatively little strain.

B. Other Agency Involvement

This section includes the client’s history of other agency involvement (child welfare, courts, drug and alcohol treatment, hospitals, etc.); the reasons for the involvement; the outcome of the involvement; client’s use of previous services.

C. Developmental History (Children and Adolescents)

If you are working with a child, you will need to take a developmental history. Some of the questions you will need to address are: Was the pregnancy planned? Was the pregnancy eventful? With low functioning clients and pregnant teens, you often ask about early medical care during the pregnancy. Birth complications should be explored. Ask about birth weight. Inquire about smoking, drug and alcohol use during pregnancy.

If you are able to secure the developmental history from the parent or caregiver of the child during early life, try to get some sense of the feelings this person had for the infant. You want to know about feeding patterns and problems. Was the child breast fed? How was the infant’s health during the first year of life? Developmental milestones are necessary information. When did the child begin to walk and talk? Explore toilet training-when did the process begin? Was it problematic? How were problems handled? Sleeping patterns should also be explored.

D. School History (Children and Adolescents)

Explore the following with the parent or caregiver: Age the child started school (head start, day care, nursery school); the child’s adjustment to the new environment; separation from parent or caregiver; relationship with peers; academic ability and performance-does the child enjoy learning? Does the child have any aspirations? Is there involvement in extracurricular activities (older children and adolescents)?

E. Overview of Current Functioning

In this section you should include the following: An overview of the family’s current and past functioning; living conditions; ethnicity; class; importance of religion or spiritual beliefs; social support system; your assessment of the fit between each subsystem and the environment; describe the family’s community and the relationship that exists (reciprocity); the family’s niche; social networking.

Give a general overview of the family and its environment using the above concepts. Discuss each member in detail. The focus of the information that you gather will be related to the primary concerns that you are addressing. The problems that are presented give you some direction as to what needs to be explored. Remember to look for client and family strengths (resources) needed to meet life tasks.

F. Medical History

Explore and describe the client's medical history. If there are medical concerns, assess the impact of these concerns on client functioning. Is the client currently taking prescription drugs? For what condition?

G. Past Psychiatric History

Explore the presence of mental illness for the client and family. If illness is present, is the client receiving treatment? Assess the impact of illness on present functioning. If there is a history, what form of treatment did client receive? Was the client hospitalized? Is the client currently taking psychotropic medication? Is the client compliant with medication regimens?

H. Alcohol and Other Drug Use (AOD)

Evaluate the both client and family current and past use of alcohol and other drugs. What drugs are/have been used? What is the frequency of use? What is the drug of choice? How are drugs obtained? What is the impact of drug and or alcohol use on daily functioning? Has treatment ever been sought? Describe current and past treatment for chemical dependency.

I. Family History

The following concepts should be explored: Family roles, authority, structures; boundaries and subsystems within the family; triangulation; enmeshment; disengagement; scapegoating. Definitions should be clearly stated and referenced from your text(s), as you apply each concept. You should try to consider the personality of your client.

In this section try to reach back in time to the influence of past events on the present. The background of the parents, and the situation of the grandparents on both sides of the family is also important. Try to get a sense of how past experiences are used. You should also obtain an understanding of historical events that influence the development of each family member. Miscarriages and deaths of children should be mentioned in your narrative. In working with older clients, apply the life-course model. Try to get a view of the world in which they lived.

J. Culture, Ethnicity, Immigrant Status

Consider the client and family system's cultural background. Culture may define the client and practitioner's perspective of the problem and the treatment options. Cultural factors may impact on the interaction between you and your client.

The majority of the population you will be working with have deep roots in other parts of the country and the world. You may need to supplement your understanding of the culture of your client through readings, but you can also ask the client to educate you about their world.

When people move to an urban environment from other places, there are often problems with the transition. Explore some of the stresses and hopes, and describe problems of making cultural transitions to a new environment.

K. Summary Statement

1. While keeping the focus on the primary concerns of the client, assess the resources and obstacles that are present that impact on the client's functioning and the fit of client/environment. Resources are used in a broad sense to include ego-strengths, athletic ability, good health, good looks, adequate income, etc. Obstacles might include the client's lack of impulse control, poor judgment, low intelligence, lack of adequate housing, poor schools, lack of understanding of the client's special needs by social agencies.
2. A plan to work with the client, including resources needed to solve the problems at hand should also be included.

III. Library Research and References

Your assessments will most likely include some problems of which you have relatively little knowledge. For example, you might have included: cancer, heart ailments, developmental disability, marital discord, sexual abuse, etc. No social worker is familiar with all of the difficulties that people encounter. Therefore, social workers should repeatedly seek library resources to add to our fund of knowledge.

This part of the assignment requires you to seek information from the Encyclopedia of Social Work, books, and at least 2 (two) social work journal articles published within the last 3 (three) years. Make sure that you have read the material that you have referenced. Use at least 5 (five) references in total. This will assist you in learning how to use library resources, including databases, to find suitable journal articles.

The text of the paper, quotations, and the reference list must be done in APA style. Leave plenty of time for this last step. Try to incorporate it as you write.