

Professional Development and Identification Paper

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Brandy Norfleet

SOCW 413, Section 1

Professor Purnell

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Over the past few months, I have been gaining knowledge in developing new skills that will help prepare me for my future in social work. I have developed various ethical principles as well as identifying my professional identity which will assist me in the transition from a student to a professional generalist social worker.

I view my ethical principles to clients in my generalist practice of social work as values and skills that I set in order to effectively work well with my particular clients. By planning, engaging in activities, and evaluating the girls (Girls Incorporated of Chattanooga) I should get a better understanding of what is beneficial to their development and what is not. This observation helps me to improve the well being of my clients. There are three ethical principles that I feel are important in my field setting. The first principle includes the dignity and worth of my clients. It is important that I treat my clients with respect and be aware of any differences among them. By showing them respect I will be more likely to receive the same respect back. I will also be able to resolve conflicts that may occur in a responsible manner. The next principle includes the importance of human relationships. It is important that I respect and honor the relationship that I have with the girls, by taking on this responsibility I will gain their trust which will lead to an effective change. I plan on using this principle in order to enhance the well-being of my clients. The last principle that I feel is important involves integrity. It is extremely important to be honest with my clients because there are some things that the girls don't feel comfortable telling everybody and some might feel as if there is no one they can come and talk to with their problems. If

## Professional Development and Identification Paper

we, as social workers, are able to assure them that we are here for them and that they don't have to worry about us sending out any information that they tell us, then they will be more willing to open up and speak their mind more fluently. I believe that since I look young and act somewhat different than most of the people that come into contact with the girls, they feel it's easier to relate to me and they're not afraid to open up. I believe that this is one of my strengths when it comes to my clients. My weakness is trying to be able to tend to all of the girls without singling one out. The challenge between the "real world" situation and the theoretical framework for this practice is that in my case I am working with girls that range between the ages of nine to twelve. This makes it a little bit more difficult in that I don't work with adults therefore I am basing my opinion off of the girls' family-systems. Observing the girls and coming up with assumptions as to how their family background might be. It is hard because the code of ethics distinguishes how we are not to judge and we're to be socially competent. However in the "real world" when put under these conditions there is a limit as to what can be determined without pre judgment. I plan to further develop myself in this situation by continuing to work directly with my clients and gaining more knowledge of their family backgrounds.

I view my professional self in terms of professional relationships as a growing process. I feel that I am learning and taking it step by step everyday. I believe that I have come a long way professionally than were I use to be. As far as my peer's, I believe they are more lenient and they don't always expect me to be professional just as I don't expect them to be at all times. However, with my

colleagues and instructors I believe that they are expecting a professional relationship in which I am trying to establish the best way that I can. I have a weakness in speaking my mind and I have come to the understanding that sometimes it is not always appropriate to do so. My strategy is to implement a more professional attitude and relationship with everyone. During the first 200 clock hours I will use it as a learning experience. I will visualize what is expected and gain knowledge as to what needs to be done so that during the remainder 200 hours that must be completed I will not need as much assistance and I will be exceedingly professional. This level of professionalism will include my ability to work effectively with others, being on time, completing assignments, accepting positive and negative feedback, and being responsible.

I view my professional identity as my willingness to observe and adjust my behavior in order to benefit me working with my clients. My identity has altered as a result of my field placement because I have learned to put my needs on hold and to respect the needs of my clients first. In this field, your clients needs come before your own. In order to get things accomplished one must have compassion and empathy for their client. To feel what they are going through and take what they tell you into consideration. My weakness is showing compassion because I am not an emotional person and even though I can empathize what they are going though I am not always able to express myself to them. My strength is being able to listen to whatever it is my client has to say. I plan to recognize my weakness and develop a way to overcome my unwillingness to express compassion.

## Professional Development and Identification Paper

I will transition myself from student to a professional generalist social worker by being able to put someone else's needs before my own, working effectively with others, and having an understanding of what all a social worker job entails. As a student I am going through the stages of observing and asking questions, as a professional social worker I will have the answers to those questions and I will be able to participate in hands on experience instead of being the one who sits back and just observes. I believe my strengths will be me wanting to go out on my own and work with different clients and be able to help them the best way I can. My weakness in becoming a professional generalist social worker involves not knowing if I will be equipped with all the information I need to assist some people. I plan on further developing myself by gathering as much information as possible so that I may not be in the position where I won't have something.

In conclusion, Social work is a great field to get into, however it can change who you are in some aspects. There are different things that one must go through in order to professionally develop. Instances such as being able to put others needs before your on, being able to be compassionate, and understanding how what we say can affect our clients in so many different ways which could possibly change their life in hopes for the better.

