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Please ask yourself the following questions...

1. What is happening? (Right here, right now, in my space)
2. What am I thinking?
3. How am I feeling? (Emotionally and physically)
4. What are my options in this given situation?
5. What is the best option?

(A Mindfulness based approach to reflection in action)

WARNING this workshop
contains potentially sensitive
material (discuss self
care/personal
responsibility/personal
development/confidentiality)

**“Too old, too fat, too
deviant or too insane;
exploring issues for
practice in relational
social care”**

Rationale for workshop...

- Counselling courses typically expect students to be at least 25 years old when they BEGIN training. Should we do the same and/or have an upper age limit for practice?
- Ireland's obesity crisis raising questions about role modelling to clients/young people. Garda fitness test raising questions about physical fitness in human service work. Possible link between obesity and inability to engage in therapeutic leisure and recreation
- Fitness to practice issues for students with criminal convictions. Prison officers cannot have EVER been in prison, should it be the same for social care, and if so do we really believe in rehabilitation and/or Rogerian unconditional positive regard?

- Student Mental Health. Five years ago, between 10-50% of my students had been diagnosed with a mental health disorder (usually depression or anxiety). Student taking meds to speak in class. Students with suicidal ideation and self injurious history coming from hospital to college. Students skipping class due to drug/alcohol use. 500,000 Irish adults taking prescribed medication for depression/anxiety. ? all forms of chemical dependence including smoking!!!

TODAY WE ARE GOING TO EXPLORE HOW EACH OF THESE ISSUES COULD IMPACT ON RELATIONAL SOCIAL CARE WORK, AND HOPFULLY START A CONVERSATION THAT EXTENDS BEYOND THIS ROOM

What is social care?

Social care work is a **relationship based** approach to the purposeful planning and provision of care, protection, **psychosocial support** and advocacy in partnership with vulnerable individuals and groups who experience marginalisation, disadvantage or special (*additional*) needs. (CORU 2020)

What is a relationship?

“The way in which two or more people or things are connected, or the state of being connected.”

What does connected mean in social care?

- Aware of..
- Supportive of/to...
- Protective of...
- Speaking on behalf of...
- Being kind to...
- Mattering...
- Conveying love to...
- Being controlling of???

What is psychosocial support?

The term 'psychosocial' refers to the relationship between psychological and social processes. So, to provide **psychosocial support** is to help people to make sense of; or learn to live with social experience in a way that enables them to cope with the challenges of life.

Is that not counselling?



I'm confused!!!

How do social care workers understand human behaviour?

- Psychodynamic approach
(Bowlby/Ainsworth/Winnicott/attachment)
- Cognitive behavioural (Classical and operant conditioning)
- Humanistic (Rogers and Maslow/Self actualisation)
- Biological

The Humanistic approach focusses on...

- Necessary elements in counselling (Core conditions), Genuineness, Empathy, Unconditional Positive Regard
- Most of the training though in Humanistic counselling is about self awareness.
- It's about understanding that relationships are **co-created** and that both parties impact on the dynamic in the relationship (and therefore each parties actions can determine/influence the outcome)
- The worker is responsible for creating/holding the relational space so s/he need to be aware of the lens through which s/he views the world

Consider the following images...

- Give the men in each picture a name
- What do you think each man works at?
- What level of education do you think the men have?
- Do you think any of the men in either picture has a criminal conviction?
- What (if any) religion does each man belong to?
- How many children (if any) do you think each man has?
- Do both pictures contain images of a couple of very similar men who share a love of horses?



In Humanistic work, awareness of our values, prejudices and emotional responses to people and situations is **HUGELY** important in how we act, react and interact with our clients

The work involves keeping our finger on the pulse of the dynamic in the relationship as it evolves and unfolds. **It is far more complex** than simply building and being in relationship!

(Remember our reflective questions)

Now comes the
work

- Divide into four groups
- Sub-divide each group and allocate positions for, or against each particular motion
- Allocate issues for debate
- Take five/ten minutes to prepare arguments for and against the following motions
- Notice your own personal development process as it relates to either speaking in front of the group, or arguing a point that you may not agree with
- Designate a spokesperson from each group

- **Group 1**: There should be an upper age limit of 60 and a lower age limit of 25 for those wishing to work in SC
- **Group 2**: There should be an optimal body fat percentage beyond which an individual should be deemed unsuited to work in SC
- **Group 3**: An individual with a criminal conviction should not be permitted to work in SC
- **Group 4**: An individual with a clinical diagnosis of negative mental health should not be permitted to work in SC

What my students say: Too Old

SCW's should be allowed to work to retirement age provided they are physically fit enough to complete any tasks that are reasonably required of them. There may be an argument for positive discrimination to ensure that there is a grandparent figure on each staff team. A lower age limit is reasonable, since it can be difficult to assert authority with clients close to your own age, though young staff understand youth culture, so there is also a benefit to having younger staff on the team

What my students say: Too Fat

Social care is about relationships and how you communicate with people, its not about your body size or shape, though it is not OK to model obesity and unhealthy lifestyles to children. The majority of students agree that you should be physically fit to engage in all of the tasks that are required of a SCW (professional and recreational) and that there is an argument for a minimum body fat percentage for those engaged in SCW.

What my students say: Too Deviant

People cannot change without opportunity, so we should allow people who have shown a commitment to treatment, rehabilitation or recovery to work in SCW. That does not extend to people who have committed any sexual offence against children (discuss Tom Humphries)

What my students say: Too Insane

People who have a history of negative mental health should be allowed to work in social care, though there does need to be some way of monitoring and evaluating the mental health status of practitioners. Students think that addiction to illegal drugs or alcohol are not OK, though dependence on prescription drugs may be acceptable, and cigarettes are OK

Thanks for
attending!

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