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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### SOCIAL WORK AND LIFE SKILL EDUCATION: SOCIAL WORKERS, THE KEY TOOL TO IMPART LIFE SKILL EDUCATION

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#### ABSTRACT

There is no good outcome without good process. The ten core life skills given by World Health Organization, plays an important role in the lives of the adolescents. The application of suitable interventional techniques is vital for the various issues encountered among individuals and group. This paper will bring out the role played by the qualified professional social workers who work as life skill trainers in a school. This paper will also address and highlight the importance of various interventional techniques used by the trainers to address the issues found among the students. The name of the school is kept confidential.

Methodology: The researcher adopted qualitative approach. The researcher has used In-depth interviews to collect data from the life skill trainers and the data are presented in the form of case study. Each case study will have the brief description of the problem, interventional technique applied and the outcome. The cases are analysed in detail, followed by suggestions in the full paper.

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## INTRODUCTION

Life skills are very essential for the smooth running of day-to-day activities. The term 'Life Skills' refers to the skills we need to make the most out of life. Life skills are usually associated with living a better quality of life. They help us to accomplish our ambitions and live to our full potential. Teaching the young adults, especially the school going students about the life skills is must. This will help them to face any obstacle that they come across in their walks of life.

The five sets of ten core life skills:

1. Decision-making and Problem- solving
2. Critical thinking and Creative thinking
3. Communication and Interpersonal relationships
4. Self-awareness and Empathy
5. Coping with Stress and Emotion

Mainstreaming the Life skill education in the educational institutions, particularly in the schools is a way to impart knowledge about the various coping strategies such as coping with fear, coping with one's emotion, coping with fear, coping with stress and so on.

Besides this, the practice of life skills helps an individual to maintain sound mental health. It also teaches various ways to maintain good interpersonal relationship with others. Considering all the facts said above, how can the life skills be mainstreamed and who can be the suitable person to take these skills and train the students on these skills? Here the social workers come as a suitable answer.

### What is Social Work? Who are Social Workers? What do they do?

Social work education consists of theoretical courses and practical training at the undergraduate or graduate level. Social work is a profession concerned with helping individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective well-being. It aims to help people develop their skills and their ability to use their own resources and those of the community to resolve problems. Social work is concerned with individual and personal problems but also with broader social issues such as poverty, unemployment and domestic violence. In a socio - political - economic context which increasingly generates insecurity and social tensions, social workers play an important and essential role. Social workers provide services as members of a multidisciplinary team or on a one-to-one basis with the client. The duties performed by social workers vary depending on the settings in which they work.

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Social workers employed by child welfare agencies (public and private) investigate cases of family violence, child abuse and neglect and take protective action as required. Many school boards hire social workers to help students adjust to the school environment. They help students, parents and teachers to deal with problems such as aggressive behaviour, truancy and family problems, which affect the students' performance. In general and psychiatric hospitals, social workers are members of the treatment team. They provide a link between the team and the family as well as with community resources. In these settings they contribute to the care, treatment and rehabilitation of the aged and of physically or mentally ill individuals, as well as the care of disabled persons. In health and community services centres, social workers are involved in the provision of counselling to individuals or families and in providing services to seniors. Some work as community developers helping citizens to identify their needs and proposing ways of meeting these needs. In the correctional field, social workers may be part of a team concerned with the social rehabilitation of young or adult offenders. They may work as classification officers. Others work as probation officers or as parole officers. Parole officers help ex-prisoners adjust to life in the community while conforming to the conditions of their parole. Social workers in private practice offer their services on a fee-for-service basis to individuals, families and organizations. Their services include counselling, psychotherapy, mediation, sex therapy, policy and program development, organizational development, and employee assistance programs.

Social workers involved in policy analysis, policy development and planning are usually working in federal and provincial departments or social planning councils. Researchers are found in universities and governments. Others are teaching in universities and community colleges.

### **How Social workers can be the right medium to impart life skill education?**

Anyone who is familiar with the field of social work would agree to that Social workers are the suitable persons to educate the students about life skills. The professional social workers undergo intense training in their respective fields during their Bachelor degree and Post Graduate degree programme. They will be placed in various NGOs, Hospitals settings, Counselling setting, Manufacturing setting as per their specialization where they undergo rigorous field work training and will be trained on various interventional techniques including the Life skills. So these trained professionals have already been exposed to the interventional techniques and skills, it will be easy for them to impart those knowledge to the students. This paper will throw light on how the social workers deal with the students with adolescent problem. This also will introduce us to the various interventional technique used and challenges faced by the concerned person in the field.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To highlight the importance of social workers being placed as Life Skill trainers
- To enumerate the application of interventional technique
- To discover if there is any hidden challenges faced by the life skill trainers

## **METHODOLOGY**

The researcher has adopted qualitative approach. The selection of sample is through Non-Probability sampling under which purposive sampling is chosen. The researcher has used In-depth interviews to collect data from the life skill trainers and the data are presented in the form of case study. Each case study will have the brief description of the problem, interventional technique applied, challenges faced and the outcome.

### **CASE STUDY**

The following are the case studies which includes the description of the problem and interventional technique applied.

#### **Case Study 1: Inappropriate classroom behaviour**

Ms. Sharon (Name Changed), who is working as a life skill trainer cum Counsellor in that school has been referred to handle a group of three boys who behaved inappropriate in the class. This group of three boys are studying in class 7, during their Maths class they were found masturbating inside the classroom at the last row. When the teacher saw this, she immediately ran out of the classroom. These three boys were sent to Ms. Sharon, she spoke to them individually and provided counselling, she also spoke to them about the changes that occurs during adolescence and how to cope up with their emotions, which is one of the life skills framed by WHO. During the follow up period it is found that the boys were behaving well by refraining from such inappropriate activities.

#### **Case Study 2: Gender Disparity and Domination**

In a class, a group of boys and girls were having gender difference problem. It was reported by the female students that the male students in the classroom were dominating the female students studying in the same class. This was brought to the notice of Mr. Suriyan (Name Changed), one of the trainers working in life skill department who has done post graduate degree in Social Work. He analyzed the problem and organized group activity to eliminate the gender difference among the students. The session covered topics like respecting opposite gender, acceptance and Interpersonal skills. In the following days it was observed that exhibition of dominating characteristics among the boys gradually vanishing.

#### **Case Study 3: Cyber bullying**

One of the life skill trainers named Ms. Vanitha (Name Changed) one of the trainers working in life skill department who has done her post graduate degree in Social Work. She received a complaint from an eleventh standard girl stating that she is being often bullied online in one of the social networking app. It was later found that the boy studying in the same class has created a fake id and contacted this girl. Both the boy and girl were given individual counselling. The ill effects and consequences behind such acts was explained and made known to them. This brought a positive change in their mind sets and helped them to abstain from such activities.

#### **Case Study 4: Challenges and Lack of Support**

The teachers working in the school have witnessed many inappropriate activities displayed by the students of both sex

such as Kissing in the corridors, Physical touching inside the classroom, substance abuse, suicidal attempts, wrong approach towards the teacher and so on. This was taken to the attention of the school correspondent and when one of the life skill trainer Ms. Vanitha (Name Changed) working in the school tried to intervene, she was asked to stay away from the issue and not to interfere in it. It reported by Ms. Vanitha that the school authorities were afraid that if this leaks out it would cost the reputation of the school. And so she was pushed to the situation from not addressing it.

## DISCUSSION

- The social workers who were placed as life skill trainers were able to identify the problems and approach them with suitable interventional technique.
- They play a huge role in imparting the life skills education.
- It is evident that the social workers can be the right medium to spread the life skills knowledge among students, since they are trained earlier in their curriculum.
- Application of the suitable interventional technique has resulted in giving positive outcome.
- The management does not give full support to the life skills trainers and their department or else this would have helped them to sort and rectify most of the problems prevailing among adolescents in the school.
- It is observed that lack of life skills education, students were not aware of themselves and their inappropriate activities towards their fellow human beings.

## CONCLUSION

From the above case study it is evident that placing the social workers as life skill trainers would be the right medium to train the students on life skills. Adding to this it is apparent that earlier diagnosis of the problem and early intervention can help an individual or a group to refrain from unexpected serious consequences and help them mould better. The subjects like Maths, Science and language will be helpful to fetch job in future but mainstreaming the life skills education will help an individual mould them better and help them lead a life as a better human being. The school authorities should look into this matter and add life skills education in their curriculum.

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